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The Week

PRESIDENT Hoover is directly responsible for the embarrassment caused the administration by the failure of Congress to ratify the moratorium agreement in time to prevent a default of the allied debt payments on December 15. He knew that, in spite of the ultimate probability of passage of this measure, there was strong opposition to it in Congress, and that if Congress was not called in session earlier it could hardly get around to ratification in time. Only his stubborn objection to an extra session caused the delay. In the meantime, his recommendation for a reconstitution of the War Debt Funding Commission has thrown into confusion the debate about the ultimate settlement of the matter. He says he does not contemplate permanent cancellation or revision downward, but if this is the case, why should the Commission be reconstituted? Then, too, the time is long past for any consideration of the subject on the basis of the separate nations' supposed capacity to pay. The country needs clear and forceful leadership which will point out that reparations and war debts ought to be canceled for the good of all concerned. Senators who object that international bankers and investors in German bonds have a good moral case, but are running up an economic blind alley. Reparations cannot be paid in any case, and probably a large portion of the private loans will be defaulted as well.

ONE interpretation of the resignation of the Wakatsuki Cabinet in Japan is that, as The New Republic has suggested, it found itself in the impossible position of being unable to force the military to live up to the promises it made to the League of Nations and the United States. Premier Inukai is supposed to be more in sympathy with the War Office, and will represent its plans more accurately. A contributory factor was probably that the Cabinet of the Minseito party found itself unable to maintain its fiscal and economic policy. This party, representing chiefly industrial interests, favors maintenance of the gold standard, a balanced budget and internal deflation in the interest of lowered costs so that export trade may be enlarged and an even balance of international payments be maintained. The Seiyukai party, on the other hand, which is more representative of feudal and nationalist interests, has favored abandonment of the gold standard, large governmental grants for internal development, inflation and a policy of national self-sufficiency. Its assumption of power in spite of its being a minority in parliament was rendered possible by the intervention of the elder statesmen, and thus represents a check to the growth of democratic parliamentary government. Japan's balance of trade has suffered from the depression, the Chinese boycott and probably from increased orders of military supplies abroad. Consequently she has lost in recent months a large part of her gold reserve. The embargo on gold and the fall in the value of the yen will make it more difficult than ever for Japan to borrow and buy abroad for military purposes. Meanwhile the Japanese people are not likely to benefit permanently from the new internal policy.

THE recent German decrees represent the most drastic control of economic affairs ever attempted in a capitalist nation. What other government has ever arbitrarily ordered that interest rates, rents,

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This attempt at forced deflation was of course the answer to the departure from the gold standard of Great Britain and other competitors in international markets. With a depreciated exchange, exporters find it easier to sell abroad. But Germany, after her experience with inflation before the Dawes settlement, fears to attempt it again, and clings like grim death to the gold standard. The only other way to seek competitive advantage in export markets is of course to reduce internal costs and prices in terms of the stable currency. We must confess a degree of admiration for the German government, which, unlike the interests in the United States who glibly demand a thoroughgoing deflation, sees the necessity under this policy of slashing incomes from capital and land as well as wages. But of course there is no logical end to competition among nations for export markets by reducing domestic incomes—no end except universal stagnation.

THE division of the Nobel Prize between Jane Addams and Nicholas Murray Butler recognizes two types of service for peace. As president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, President Butler was a sincere advocate of the "war to end war." He accepted the policy of ruthlessness so far as it could be practised by a noncombatant. His denunciation of Senator La Follette for fulfilling his responsibilities as a statesman, his dismissal of Professor Cattell for exercising his rights as a citizen in protesting against the conscription law, remain high water marks of what it is charitable to call wartime hysteria. Since the War, President Butler has been a conspicuous orator for peace. Jane Addams was an early and constant advocate of peace through mediation of the neutral nations. She was not, as is often stated, a member of the company on Ford's Peace Ship, for she was at that time in the hospital, and she disapproved of the advertising policy of that enterprise. She accepted without complaint, however, the repudiation and contempt which advocates of America's participation in the War visited upon those who opposed such intervention. It must be apparent, even to President Butler, that the burden of the War under which the world is staggering was vastly increased by throwing the weight of America into the scales of belligerency. The acceptance of the Prize affords him a fine opportunity to say so.

BY HEROIC measures, including almost compulsory taxation of employees' pay envelopes in many instances, the individualistic charity parade has been carried on more or less gloriously in 144 American cities. New York's Unemployment Relief Committee has finally reached its objective of $18,000,000, and its weary members are now busy felicitating each other. The general ballyhoo should lull no one into believing that the emergency in this country has been met. According to a letter ad- increase in relief funds raised this year of only 14.3 percent in 130 cities reporting results. This increase, as he points out, seems disastrously small as against the huge rise in relief expenditures by typical large cities during September of this year: New York, 125 percent; St. Louis, 214 percent; Chicago, 267 percent; Philadelphia, 404 percent. But even these expenditures make no pretense of covering the irreducible minimum necessary to sustain the destitute, which Mr. Billikopf's organizations have estimated to be $21.97 per week for each family of five persons. Finally, the organized measures of the larger cities in no way reflect conditions in thousands of small towns and villages throughout the country. The bulk of relief, over 70 percent of it, must still come from the public treasuries; yet few municipalities, counties and states are preparing to meet the heavier demand. A great many of them are in no position to do so; and must count upon federal funds to rescue them.

THE second of the murder trials arising from the battles in Harlan County, Kentucky, has resulted in defeat for the miners. William B. Jones, secretary of the miners' union, accused of having taken part in the shootings at Evarts, May 5, when four deputy sheriffs were killed, has been convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. He is not, at any rate, to be punished with death, as the prosecution demanded; and the defense has made a motion for a retrial on the grounds of incompetent evidence and improper argument by the Commonwealth. Reports of the trial indicate that its atmosphere was heavily charged with intrigue, melodrama and class hatred. Some of the evidence brought against Jones was by former strikers who had turned state's evidence; they have been accused of having been bribed by the coal companies. One of the arguments by the Commonwealth's attorney ran as follows, according to The New York Times: "Acquit this man, and there will be celebrations in a thousand places in the United States and Moscow. . . ." The scene of battle at Evarts has been described as a raid, during which hundreds of shots were exchanged and in which the miners fought for their lives. Under such circumstances one might easily fix the guilt upon the coal operators, who ordered intolerable wage cuts last spring. In the meantime the outlook is dark for the twenty other Kentucky miners, four of them Negroes, who are soon to be tried similarly for murder and conspiracy.

WHEN the United States announced its official evacuation of Haiti, on October 1, 1931, The New Republic took occasion to commend the State Department, while pointing out at the same time that continued American control of Haitian finances and police power would furnish lingering causes of dissatisfaction. Now it appears, sadly enough, that Haiti has gained little actual autonomy; that cer-

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dollar without the consent of the American Financial Adviser; and that recently the Financial Adviser, in conjunction with the United States Minister, attempted to force the government of Haiti to accept his dictation by withholding all Haitian salaries—in the interest of a $15,000,000 loan made by the National City Bank, it is contended. These abuses are described in a memorial of protest which has been sent to President Hoover and signed by representatives of nine progressive American organizations. The continued American control of the Garde d'Haiti, the native police force, is considered especially provoking, and is heartily disliked by the Latin American nations whom our ostensible evacuation of Haiti was designed to placate. All the motives advanced for this skeleton control—the military and financial unpreparedness of Haiti, protection of the Panama Canal—seem poor and profitless as against the great advantages and safeguards that would accrue to us from improved relations with Latin America. In this direction we can only make a beginning by giving the Haitians a real, and not a shadowy, independence.

FOR the first time in the history of this country, so far as the records show, the tide of immigration has reversed itself. During the first nine months of the present calendar year the number of departing aliens exceeded that of immigrants by 22,769. What is more, the trend has been more sharply emphasized in recent months: according to an analysis of federal reports by the National Industrial Conference Board, the exodus from the United States is now proceeding at the rate of over 40,000 a year. The ebbing of the tide began, apparently, toward January 1, 1931. Owing to the business slump, drastic administrative measures have been used to supplement the national-origins-quota act of July 1, 1929, which served to reduce immigration so heavily. The whole development appeals to us, like certain other events in these epoch-making years, as a turning point in our history. During a very long era, as nearly all historians and economists hold, the immigrants played a most vital part in the extension of our frontiers, the exploiting of resources and the upbuilding of national wealth. Now we may never again see the picturesque immigration of hordes of aliens—sometimes totaling a million as in 1914—to this land of "boundless opportunity." And whatever sentimental or moral reflections it may provoke, the stoppage of immigration reminds us, above all, of how far the United States has moved from its recent phase of pioneering and free opportunity. It points to a more controlled economic era, in which competition, the play of chance, and heedless population growth are to be less decisive factors in the national destiny.

THE $21,000,000 suit by stockholders against the management of the old Gillette Safety Razor Company has brought forth some rather illuminating in- bankers. One recent revelation, out of many, may be cited. For many years, according to the testimony, the Gillette company treated its shipments to subsidiaries as sales rather than consignments. By this unusual method of accounting, the company reported "anticipated" or "inflated" profits on goods that actually remained on the shelves of subsidiaries. Although the stockholders were unaware that part of the reported "profits" were still in the form of unsold inventory, the company itself used this fact as a basis for reduction or abatement of taxes. After considerable bickering, permission was obtained from the federal authorities to pay income taxes on only 90 percent of its profits as shown on the company's books. In other words, published figures were 10 percent higher than the company was actually earning.

SIMILARLY the stockholders disclosed that there was an overstatement of $10,000,000 in the surplus account in the annual report for 1929. How did Mr. John E. Aldred, who was for thirteen years chairman of the Board and of the Executive Committee, defend this accounting? He admitted under questioning that the system might be abused by "overenthusiastic or unscrupulous men," but that it had never occurred to him to check up on its use by looking at the auditor's annual report. "I never lifted the cover," he said. "Never in thirteen years?" asked the stockholders' attorney, unwilling to believe his ears. "No," replied Mr. Aldred, "nor in any other corporation I was with." Certainly it is difficult to take Mr. Aldred's assertion literally. Even if he "never lifted the cover," one can hardly believe that he was unfamiliar with the corporation's financial affairs. It is small wonder that the stockholders are now curious to learn just what services were performed by Mr. Aldred to earn his annual salary of $12,000, and by Aldred and Comany, fiscal agents for Gillette, for an annual fee of $25,000. Mr. Aldred, as a prominent and successful banker, is connected with thirty-six companies, as director or executive, including some of the most important in this country and Canada. In England, Lord Kylsant was sent to jail for allowing misleading financial reports of his company to be issued.

ALTHOUGH the National Child Labor Committee, in its annual report just issued, refers to recent progress with pardonable pride, it is disheartening to hear that a million or more children and young people under eighteen years of age are still at work or looking for work in competition with unemployed adults. It is true that the labor of boys under sixteen has been eliminated from the most dangerous and toilsome occupations—from the coal breakers and glass works. Even in backward states the labor of children of twelve and thirteen years in cotton mills has been outlawed during the last few years. But "the grosser forms

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tary of the Committee reports. According to the census of 1930, 3,326,152 children of seven to seventeen years of age are out of school, at least a third of them being employed at gainful labor—at home, on farms, in factories and canneries. Here, surely, is an opportunity for government to extend employment opportunities, by the rigorous enforcement of a humane child-labor code. But the most serious obstacle to such advance is the inconsistent and conflicting legislation in all our states, not only in the matter of child labor, but of labor in general.

OUR college boys have been found wanting in political acumen by experts such as Mr. H. L. Mencken; they have been called apathetic on all questions save sartorial ones by Mr. Harold Laski and other scholars. But if we may judge from the sentiments among Yale's undergraduates, the next generation of students may turn out to have a different political temper. A poll conducted by The Yale News on the question of world peace showed that 92 percent of the students favored the reduction of armaments, 1,269 voting for moderate disarmament, while 987 voted for complete disarmament. A large minority, 938, even felt that the United States should reduce its own armaments independently; while an overwhelming majority, 2,012, voted in favor of our joining the World Court. But most noteworthy was the way in which compulsory military training was repudiated by a vote of 2,259 to 190. Analysis of the ballot figures by the editors of The Yale News showed that the glory of war was somewhat more abhorrent to upperclassmen than to freshmen who, of course, suffered from a few years less of light and learning.

WHILE other uncommercial magazines have sprung up and died, like annual flowers, The Midland, founded sixteen years ago by John T. Frederick in order to "encourage the making of literature in the Middle West," has had a long and honorable record. In its unostentatious way, it has discovered and published some native talents of distinction; it has been rated highest among American magazines for its short stories by that veteran compiler of anthologies, Edward J. O'Brien. But though its editors receive no honorarium, and have generally met its modest yearly deficits out of their own pockets, it has been found harder and harder to keep the publication afloat in these difficult times, when cultural enterprises suffer perhaps more than all others. Extinction has threatened The Midland, and this at a time when the editor reports larger, more varied and more interesting offerings of manuscripts. It is therefore heartening to learn that the emergency efforts of readers as well as editors have assured The Midland's existence during 1932. Beyond next year, prospects for survival are still poor, but appeals are being made to all those interested in the development of Middle Western literature and in the publication of new work by

The Rich Man's Budget

THE QUESTION concerning federal taxation has now become, not shall taxes be increased, but how shall they be increased? The administration proposes to divide the main burden between two sources of funds: (1) miscellaneous taxes on business transactions, such as sales of automobiles, trucks and radios, admission to amusements, telephone and telegraph messages and checks and realty conveyances, and (2) income taxes. The latter are to be raised to the level of 1924—which was the result of two reductions from the war rates. The personal exemptions are to be lowered to $1,000 for a single and $2,500 for a married man. Corporation income taxes are to be subjected to an inconsiderable increase from 12 to 12½ percent, while the estate tax is to be raised a tiny amount. By these means the Secretary of the Treasury hopes to reduce the deficit of $2,000,000,000 to $1,500,000,000 in 1932 and to $500,000,000 in 1933.

The first objection to the proposal lies against the taxes on sales and other business transactions. All taxes of this nature bear more heavily on those of small income than on those of large income; they are not, like income taxes, adjusted to ability to pay. They hamper general consumption and are thus particularly undesirable in a time of depression. They are more costly to collect than taxes on income, and are likely to be more burdensome to the payer in relation to the yield to the government.

The second objection is to a restoration, unmodified, of the 1924 income-tax rates. These bear more heavily than present rates on incomes of all classes. It would be better to seek the same or an increased yield by lesser burdens on the low incomes and greater burdens on the larger ones. Our rates in the higher ranges of income were, even in 1924, considerably lower than those levied in a number of other countries, and below those established by our own laws of 1921 or 1918. By this time Secretary Mellon's old contention that high rates on large incomes hamper prosperity and restrict tax yields has been completely exploded. With higher rates than those of 1924, we were prosperous in 1918, 1919 and 1920, as well as in 1923. Tax yields would unquestionably have been larger than they were between 1924 and 1929 if rates had not been reduced. After reduction we have suffered the worst depression in history. Theoretically, the Secretary's argument rests on a number of dubious assumptions. One is that prosperity is sustained by investments of the rich rather than by expenditures of the general population. There are good reasons to believe that in recent years we have had too much investment relative to popular purchasing power. Another unfounded assumption is that even under the highest rates we have ever placed on large incomes, there would be any lack of investment resources. Another is that money taken in

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other investors—as when government bonds are redeemed. Still another is that private investment is necessarily more productive of prosperity than investment by the government. This is particularly absurd under present circumstances, when individuals with money can hardly find a way to invest it at a profit, whereas there is a real need for governmental funds for a large and stimulative program of public works. How many business men with a spark of common sense would not rather have families with incomes below, say $5,000, retain their existing spending power, even at the risk of being taxed more themselves when, and if, their net incomes climbed above the $100,000 class?

Corporate incomes could certainly stand a higher tax rate than 12½ percent. It is to be remembered that income taxes do not apply where there is no income, and apply lightly where there is little. Nor is there any justification for the argument that corporate income taxes are passed on to the consumer. In a competitive market prices respond to the forces of demand and supply. In so far as costs limit reduction of prices, they limit them at the cost level of the competitor who makes little or no profit and therefore pays little or no tax. Corporations which control the prices they charge presumably charge as much as they think it good policy to ask, tax or no tax.

Perhaps the biggest hole in the apportionment of the proposed new taxation is the failure to increase more substantially the rates on estates. Inheritance taxation is conceded by most economists to be the soundest of all types, both in social and in economic policy. Secretary Mellon proposes an increase of the maximum rate to 25 percent, whereas the maximum in 1924 was 40 percent. As Professor E. R. A. Seligman points out, the maximum rates abroad are 50, 60 and 75 percent, or even, as in France, 98 percent. He states that if the rate had been the same here as in Great Britain, the yield from this source alone would have been about $650,000,000 in 1930—far more than would be gained by all the proposed miscellaneous taxes as well as by the lowering of the exemption on income taxes.

We should also examine the reason for additional taxation. If governmental expenses are to be held down as the Mellon budget proposes, the amount he expects to raise by taxes in the next two years will mean that during this period only $2,000,000,000 will have to be raised by loans. The borrowing power of the government is far greater than this; during the War the proportion of revenue from taxes to that from loans was about one to five. This emergency is surely as great as that of the War. If we assume—as we must assume in order to make any fiscal policy sensible—that the depression is temporary, we have every reason to believe that with a business recovery the budget would again be in balance without much increase of rates; the chief reason for increased taxation at present is to provide surpluses large enough to retire quickly the debts now incurred, and thus maintain confidence in federal credit. The principal benefit of increased taxation, therefore, is that it gives the government an opportunity to spend much more than it otherwise could. And that is the real end to be sought, for large governmental expenditure is now the chief hope of stemming the depression.

The administration budget is therefore unsound in two ways. It proposes to tax the moderate incomes too much and the rich too little, and it declines to use for the relief and diminution of unemployment the spending power which tax increases will release. It represents a continuation into depression of the outrageous policy adopted during prosperity—that care chiefly of the interests of the rich is what the country needs.

Rigged Financial Reports

THE SMALL moneyed classes of Americans, holders of insurance policies and bank-deposit books, cannot safely be told the truth about their companies. But they can safely be told something else. That is the position just taken behind closed doors by the state supervisors of insurance companies. It is the position which individual state supervisors of banks are taking, one after another, throughout the country. A few courageous men among them have publicly repudiated this policy. They have pointed out that it will imperil, not improve, confidence and postpone the corrective processes which might advance recovery.

Under the laws of the states, insurance companies and banks must periodically publish the value of their property—the property bought with the money of their policy-holders and depositors. This is a necessary safeguard for the protection of the public, so that it may know that their companies are being conservatively managed, and that their savings are being preserved by the company managers. Some of the companies own stocks and most of them own bonds. They will have to disclose their value by December 31. The state supervisors, with whom the insurance-company reports are to be filed, have decided that the companies may ascribe to their stock and bond holdings the market values which they had on June 30, and treat these as their true value on December 31, though in many instances stock values have been cut in two during the last six months.

Commissioner Dunham of Connecticut issued a public statement, noting the "serious . . . ethical responsibilities of the insurance commissioners," the danger of "more or less serious falsification," the need for "careful insistence on the absolute integrity of financial statements." He regarded the majority's letting down of the bars as a "weakness of policy . . . sure to be harmful. It is far better that actual conditions shall be made clear . . ." than

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to linger along limpingly in disregard of the realities of the situation."

The issue concerns the holders of 68,000,000 life-insurance policies and the numerous holders of fire and other policies. Examination of the records suggests that fright, not facts, dictated the majority proposal. It is based on the assumptions that the prices of December 31 will subsequently be found absurdly low, and that the prices of June 30 are the normal prices of stocks. The state insurance commissioners, having started to value stocks by a guessing process, have made a bad guess. The testimony before the La Follette committee in October shows that June 30 prices of stocks (based on the 404 issues used by Standard Statistics) are higher than the prices during the nine years 1918 to 1926. They are twice as high as the prices in June, 1921, during the much milder depression of ten years ago. It is highly probable that a preliminary to economic recovery must be the writing down of capital claims on future production. Neither earnings nor revised asset values justify the broad assumption that the value of stocks today is higher than their market prices were in the years from 1918 to 1926. The supervisors are betting that the prices of June 30 will soon be restored. If they are right, some receiverships may be prevented. But if they are wrong, the ultimate result will be all the worse.

The insurance commissioners may be merely postponing the evil day. They may be accentuating it. If market prices do not go lower, if stocks adjust themselves to a normal more in accord with the years 1918-26 than with the years 1927-30, the insurance-company reports for the end of this year will have to be radically revised, downwards. If market prices go still lower, the companies will be suffering even more from the inflated balance sheets they are permitted to make for this December.

The insurance commissioners are not merely covering up the facts. They are covering up an evil. That evil is stock speculation by those insurance companies which invest policy-holders' money in stocks. Insurance policies call for payment of specified sums. This payment requires only prudent, nonspeculative investment in high-grade mortgage bonds. Speculative purchases may increase the profits of stockholders or managements of insurance companies. But this endangers the money pool which policy-holders have contributed. Not merely impairment of reserves is threatened. Some companies have become valuable to their managements, not as insurers, but as reservoirs of money for speculation. This perversion of the insurance business has been heightened in cases where insurance companies have been fought for and captured by investment bankers or others. They have then become feeders for other lines of business, speculative or even dishonest.

Many insurance companies are prohibited by law from buying stocks. A true picture of the damage lation, would help to extend a wholesome prohibition to all insurers.

Even with respect to lower grades of bonds, the position taken by the insurance commissioners is dangerous. Companies which invested in such bonds as those of public-utility holding companies, and the second, third and fourth mortgages of operating concerns, often have little better than stocks. The dubious advantage of such bonds over stocks is the right to put a property into receivership if it does not pay its interest charges.

In valuing this category of securities, the inflated balance sheets which insurance companies are to be permitted to issue are matched by the financial statements which many state-bank supervisors are now authorizing. At a recent convention of the bank commissioners in New Orleans, the Pennsylvania commissioner recommended a basis of valuation which gravely disregards market prices. The New York superintendent of banks has considerably relaxed even the loose limits proposed by his colleague. The result is that early next month bank depositors in many states will receive bank balance sheets not worthy of the name.

A fairer attitude toward policy-holders and depositors is to be found in the long established practice of some of the Canadian banks, which have religiously reported their bond holdings, even their holdings of government bonds, at not higher than market value. A compromise method, no less informing, was used by some of the better savings banks last December, in stating both the cost and the market value of their bond holdings.

The position now taken by state supervisors may be embarrassing to the stronger and more conservative insurers and banks. But these companies can afford to brave the hostility of state officers whose pride may be hurt if insurers and bankers issue year-end statements that reflect year-end values. They cannot afford to publish any other statements. We have just passed through an international and domestic run on the dollar. To prevent another run, our great financial institutions must avoid any substitution of propaganda for balance sheets.

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Religion and Love in Russia

"THE OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE."—The anti-religious campaign in Russia goes forward steadily, though its character has been much changed of late. As with the work of bringing the peasants into the collective farms, the government found that it had been going too fast and that the zeal of Communists in the villages had led them into undesirable excesses. The new principle is that no church is to be destroyed or put to other uses, unless a majority of the communicants desire it, whether this means leaving it open one year or ten. How far this policy is now being carried into practice it is impossible for me to say from my own knowledge.

When a church is closed, the question is considered whether it is an important historical monument; if so, it is left standing and perhaps turned into a museum. If it does not obtain this rating, it will be converted to secular uses or destroyed. It is difficult to put Russian churches to any other employment, since they are very badly lighted and the floor space is broken up into numerous small alcoves whose partition walls could not be cut away without endangering the whole structure. In at least one case, a former cathedral which was one of the most beautiful and costly in all Russia has been converted into an anti-religious museum, and parties of Russians, children or adults, are conducted through it all day long by earnest guides who point out the significance of the various exhibits, only rarely raising their eyes to the incredibly beautiful decorations overhead.

In its early stages the anti-religious campaign went in for denunciations of the priests, couched in the language of passionate abuse; but all this has now been changed. The exhibits in the special museums are devoted to proving, statistically and through exhaustive charts and diagrams, that the Russian church was a tool of capitalism and of the Tsar. There are graphs showing the huge and increasing proportion of the national income which went into the pockets of the hierarchy; specimens of the pictures which were circulated among the illiterate and superstitious peasantry, pictures which subtly suggested that the Tsar was, like the Mikado of Japan, of superhuman origin; statements of the staggering private incomes enjoyed by the princes of the church, and the like.

Miraculous mummies.—The Russian church used to lay great stress on the "miraculous" mummification which supposedly took place when certain local, saintlike priests had died; after a long interval their bodies would be dug up and placed on display in the church, though usually so wrapped in vestcheek would be left for the inspection of the devout. How important these relics were in the religious scheme of things no American who thinks in terms of American conditions can possibly realize. The Communists have sought to offset them in two ways. First of all, they put on display some secular mummies of their own, exactly as well preserved as those of the church, with elaborate explanations that it is chalky soil which accomplishes this permutation, and that the devoutness of the deceased has nothing to do with it. (They occasionally show side by side, for instance, a mummified rat, an executed murderer, and a saint, all in the same condition.) Second, they have in the presence of many witnesses unwrapped the vestments from certain of the holy mummies and have revealed that, as might have been expected, since natural production was too slow and sparse for a country teeming with churches, many of these sacred objects consisted of an odd-lot of sheeps' bones assembled under a sheet in such a way as to resemble roughly the skeleton of a man. Just how much effect these museums, and the accompanying propaganda in print, in the movies and on the radio, are having it would be impossible to say; not even the Russians really know. It is probably the case, as it is the world over, that the museums are patronized chiefly by those who already agree with their argument, and that the devout do not go.

It is the fashion for optimistic social philosophers to say that persecution of any cause devoutly held merely makes the flames burn the brighter, but this is not always or necessarily true. Sometimes a cause which is driven underground simply dies and rots there. It is extremely unfashionable to go to church in Russia now; priests are subjected to every sort of difficulty, being placed in the last category as regards distribution of food, etc., and deprived of civil rights. Church-controlled schools are of course absolutely forbidden, and any child who receives religious instruction must get it in the home and in a semi-surreptitious manner. His religious faith, if he has any, must withstand the shock of emphatic atheistic teaching in school, producing at least in the younger children a state of bewilderment well expressed by the little girl who said, "Well, it's this way: there *is* a God, but I don't believe in Him." I should be amazed to learn that more than one-tenth of one percent of the Russian children come out of school any less wholeheartedly devoted to atheism than they are to Communism. This is at least one reason why the congregations in the churches are steadily dwindling. They have today hardly any communicants who are less than thirty years of age; even if the government should

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would be only a question of a few decades before they were starved out and disappeared.

Can they live without it?—The two stereotyped observations which people outside Russia make on this matter are, "No nation can live without a religion of *some* kind," and then, brightly, "But of course, Communism is a religion to them, isn't it?" The first of these is, I believe, historically inaccurate; and whether it has any validity today we shall presently see. The fight in Russia, of course, has thus far been mainly not against religion, but against an organized church which certainly was an old man of the sea on the peasants' backs. While any sort of mysticism would be regarded as out of order for a good Communist, there is thus far no particular objection to other Russians' going in for transcendentalism of any variety they like, provided they don't try to organize it. At the same time, I think no one will deny that, generally speaking, a high degree of education is the foe of orthodoxy, and to a lesser extent, of mysticism in general; the Russian scheme of things envisages a far greater degree of education, for absolutely everybody, than has ever been contemplated anywhere else.

As for the notion that "Communism is a religion in Russia," as it is commonly interpreted this is plain nonsense. Communism is an obsession, if you like, a monomania, but it is not in any sense mystical. Religion lives on faith, but Communism lives on works and in the long run, if it does not provide these works it will have to go. Lenin is sometimes quoted as though he were the world's one great fount of wisdom; but nothing is clearer today than that general policies are changed, not in accordance with what he wrote, but in accordance with the facts, as they are gathered by individual Communists out on the firing line everywhere, reported back to the factory and village Soviets and passed up and up to where Stalin and his advisers sit in the Kremlin. After a new policy has been decided upon in the light of the facts, it is usually not hard to find somewhere in Lenin's writings a passage which either justifies the alteration or can be made to do so.

It can be changed.—If anyone observes that "you can't change human nature," the only intelligent answer is in capital letters, "YES, YOU CAN SO." Human nature is one of the most malleable things in the world. The history of morals, of marriage, of religion, shows us how easy it is to make mankind conform to practically any pattern, provided only that you catch it young enough—beginning, say, at the age of two minutes. Those who observe that "Russia can't live without religion" usually mean that middle-aged Americans or Englishmen, brought up in a religious atmosphere, wouldn't like to be forced to change over. But this truth has nothing to do with the question of young Russians suckled in atheism from the cradle. As for their

yet available are not sufficient to make a judgment one way or the other. In thirty years, we shall perhaps know. For the present it can only be said that those who are growing up in Russia give no evidence of missing the formal, mystical religion which is denied them. In richness of personality, enthusiasm, ambition, energy, such Russian boys and girls of eighteen or twenty as I have had the opportunity to observe compared so favorably with the average college student of either sex at home that, as a good American, my impulse was to weep for my countrymen.

Gossip about morals.—One of the difficulties which hamper foreigners in understanding Russia is that we are prepared to believe almost anything, good or bad, about that amazing country. The Russian Communist movement has its "lunatic fringe," like every movement everywhere else; and when one of these wild men makes a statement about something which he thinks ought to be done, we are all too likely to assume, first, that this is the policy of the government, and second, that intention is identical with accomplishment. Probably there are few people with any pretension to intelligence who any longer believe the absurd stories about the "nationalization of women"; but there are doubtless many more who believe that the Russians are intent on destroying the home, as an institution, and have already made great strides in that direction. But for every Communist theorist who argues that the home is a center of bad, bourgeois ideology, I think I can find at least another who maintains that it is a necessary and continuing institution—transmogrified, of course, by existing under a Communist State.

Certainly there is very little evidence that the home is being destroyed in Russia any more than, or even as much as, it is in the United States. There is no Russian equivalent of those vast new hotels, for bachelors only, or for "bachelor girls" only, which have sprung up in recent years in New York. It is true that the U.S.S.R. is going in for nurseries and orphanages extensively, but this is chiefly because she has to. The crèches which are attached to the new apartment houses, and to some of the factories, are just like similar institutions in America; women leave their children while they are at work, and come and reclaim them when they return home. The community dining-rooms in the apartment houses differ little from the similar services in American apartment hotels; the Russian housewife may feed her family there or in her own apartment as she likes. The chief difference from America lies in the fact that for workers the food served is extraordinarily inexpensive; a whole family can be fed, and well fed by the standards of the country, for a dollar a day.

These wild young Communists.—Wise people in Russia assure me that the situation in regard to

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the United States, except that the Americans pretend to a standard which they do not observe, and the Russians are more honest about it. There has always been a certain amount of freedom in Russia, in Tsarist days as well as now. If anything, the tendency at present is toward greater strictness; the young Communists are essentially Puritans in their outlook, and frown upon excessive sex indulgence as they do upon excessive drinking or even the use of tobacco; these things are all taboo because they detract from the concentration of effort and energy toward building the socialist State.

There is no such thing as an illegitimate child in the U.S.S.R.; every baby has an equal standing with every other. Any two people who live together are regarded, both legally and otherwise, as being married, irrespective of whether they have gone around to the registry office and recorded the fact. If a woman gives birth to a child, and she is not living with the father, she tells the officials who he is and he is compelled to contribute his fair share toward its rearing. If she is of an enthusiastic temperament and there are several possible candidates for the honor, they are all summoned for a hearing, and the court (perhaps a little arbitrarily) selects the nominee, presumably choosing the one in the best financial position to give assistance.

As everyone now knows, both marriage and divorce are exceedingly easy and simple in Russia. In divorce, about all that the government asks is that both parties agree as to what they want—certainly an infinitely better attitude than the idiotic rule in New York State, for instance, where "collusion," if known, becomes a fatal obstacle. When man and wife appear before the court, seeking a divorce, an attempt is usually made to reconcile them, and it is sometimes successful; but generally speaking, if they really want a divorce they get it. If there are children, the parents share the responsibility for their maintenance according to their respective means.

Birth control in Russia.—Many Americans must have been puzzled by an apparent contradiction in Russia regarding the attitude of the State on contraception. We have been told that the government was not sympathetic toward birth control, though it countenances abortion. It is a fact that Russian authorities do not consider that the optimum population is a stationary or declining one, at least for that country and at the present time. They will tell you that with Communism, Russia can easily maintain a far larger population than at present, and believing as they do that the capitalist powers of the West are planning to make war on them, they welcome the idea of plenty of future soldiers for the Red army. At the same time, they recognize the right of every woman to have no more children than she wishes. The real reason why birth control is not more widely practised in all sorts of goods embraces also contraceptive appliances.

At least in the cities and larger towns, abortion is performed free of charge at the hospitals for any woman who asks for it. I am told that medical officers try to persuade the applicant not to have the operation, particularly if she has never had a child, but that they readily yield if she is insistent. The mortality from such operations is so low as to be negligible, and that is saying a great deal in view of general Russian conditions and sanitary standards. Among the peasants abortion is little practised; and since they are still 80 percent of the population, the birth rate is almost as high as it was in the days of the Tsar, though the death rate has fallen by many points.

The oldest profession.—Russia has not succeeded in abolishing prostitution; but it is safe to say that she has come nearer to doing so than any other country in the world. One of the numerous great contrasts if you come from Berlin to Leningrad and Moscow is between the hordes of women, twenty to a block, soliciting every passer-by on Unter den Linden, and the entire absence of anything similar in the Russian cities. Foreign visitors to Moscow are always proudly shown the prophylactorium where prostitutes are "reformed." There these women receive the medical treatment which is usually necessary and are taught a trade, the commonest choice being textile-machine operating. When they are ready to leave, positions are found for them in industry and the directors of the prophylactorium keep an eye on them as long as is necessary. Some of them revert to their former occupation, but the records indicate that the percentage of those who do so is less than ten. While statistics on this subject are naturally unreliable, the Communists believe that they have already abolished perhaps 90 percent of professional prostitution. They argue that while there is, and perhaps always will be, a small proportion of nymphomaniacs, most prostitution is economic in its origin; and that when every young woman is taught a trade and given a job, the temptation is greatly reduced.

This sounds plausible; but there is another strong reason, not usually mentioned, for the reduction of prostitution in the cities of Russia at present. That is the housing shortage. The prostitute needs a room of her own, and such a thing is an almost undreamed of luxury for the average Russian. Even if she has one, as soon as her way of life becomes known to her neighbors in the same building, she is almost certain to be denounced to the authorities by someone who is feverishly eager to get possession of the space she occupies. To be turned out of your dwelling in Russia is a tragedy the extent of which an American can hardly grasp. The real test of the Communist

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Moscow to Hollywood. — The Russians are scornful of the American preoccupation with sex, as reflected in our movies, plays and popular fiction. To them sex is interesting, serious—and incidental. Their daily journals contain practically none of the sort of news which enables the New York tabloids to exist. The breathless, Oriental worship of sex which permeates the whole being of the average Hollywood film producer seems to them highly pathological, and rather fitting its possessor to be locked in an asylum than to purvey the intellectual and emotional food of half the nation. To the Russian film producer, editor or author, the Five Year Plan is approximately the equivalent of what sex is to his American opposite number. While I would not, as a good American, decry the importance of sex—some of my best friends have been male or female—you cannot be in Moscow very long without getting some of the Russian attitude about the relative importance of Hollywood aphrodisiacs and such a thing as pulling a mighty nation up by its bootstraps from unbelievable ignorance and poverty. To be sure, the Russians may become more American as they get richer . . . they may, but I doubt that they will. In the meantime, here is the first dollar toward sending the editor of Smutty Stories, Mr. Farbgargle of Red Hot Films, and all their brothers, to Moscow for an enforced sojourn of a month, for the good of their souls and, ultimately, our own.

BRUCE BLIVEN.

Moscow.

Red Day on Capitol Hill

WASHINGTON has a drowsy look in the early December sunlight. The Greco-Roman porticoes loom among the bare trees, as vaguely portentous as phrases about democracy in the mouth of a Southern Senator. The Monument, a finger of light cut against a lavender sky, punctuates the antiquated rhetoric of the Treasury and the White House. On the hill, above its tall foundation banked with magnolia trees, the dome of the Capitol bulges smugly. At nine o'clock groups of sleepy-looking cops in well brushed uniforms and shiny-visored caps are straggling up the hill. At the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and John Marshall Place a few hunger marchers stand around the trucks they came in. They look tired and frowzy from the long ride. Some of them are strolling up and down the avenue. That end of the avenue, with its gimcrack stores, boarded-up burlesque shows, Chinese restaurants and flophouses, still has a little of the jerkwater, out-in-the-sticks look it must have had when Lincoln drove up it in a barouche through the deep mud or Jefferson rode to his inauguration on his own quiet nag.

Two elderly laboring men are looking out of a cigar-store door at a bunch of Reds, young Jewish boys from New York or Chicago, with the white armbands of the hunger marchers. "Won't get nutten that a-way," one of them says. "Whose payin' for it anyway, hirin' them trucks and the gasoline. . . . Somebody's payin' for it," barks the clerk indignantly from behind the cash register. "Better'd spent it on grub or to buy 'emselves overcoats," says the older man. The man who first spoke shakes his head sadly. "Never won't get nutten that a-way." Out along the avenue a few Washingtonians look at the trucks and old moving afraid the trucks would explode; they are obviously swallowing their unfavorable comments for fear some of the marchers might hear them. Tough eggs, these Reds.

At ten o'clock the leaders start calling to their men to fall in. Some tall cops appear and bawl out drivers of cars that get into the streets reserved for the marchers to form up in. The marchers form in a column of fours. They don't look as if they'd had much of a night's rest. They look quiet and serious and anxious to do the right thing. Leaders, mostly bareheaded youngsters, run up and down, hoarse and nervous, keeping everybody in line. Most of them look like city dwellers, men and women from the needle trades, restaurant workers, bakery or laundry employees. There's a good sprinkling of Negroes among them. Here and there the thick shoulders and light hair of a truck driver or farm hand stand out. Motorcycle cops begin to cluster around the edges. The marchers are receiving as much attention as distinguished foreign officials.

Up on the hill cordons of cops are everywhere, making a fine showing in the late fall sunshine. There's a considerable crowd standing around; it's years since Washington has been interested in the opening of Congress. They are roping off the route for the hunger marchers. They stop a taxicab that is discovered to contain a small white-haired Senator. He curses the cops out roundly, and is hurriedly escorted under the portals.

Inside the Capitol things are very different. The light is amber and greenish, as in an aquarium. Elderly clerks white as termites move sluggishly along the corridors, as if beginning to stir after a long hibernation. The elevator boy is very pale. "Here comes the army of the unfed," he says,

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said they couldn't." A sound of music comes faintly in. Led by a band with silvery instruments like Christmas-tree ornaments that look cheerful in the bright sunlight, the hunger marchers have started up Capitol Hill. Just time to peep down into the Senate Chamber where elderly parties and pasty-faced pages are beginning to gather. Ever seen a section of a termite nest under glass?

There's a big crowd in the square between the Capitol and the Congressional Library. On the huge ramps of the steps that lead to the central portico the metropolitan police has placed some additional statuary: tastefully arranged groups of cops with rifles, riot guns and brand-new tear-gas pistols that look as if they'd just come from Sears Roebuck. People whisper "machine-gun nests," but nobody seems to know where they are. There's a crowd on the roof around the base of the dome, faces are packed in all the windows. Everybody looks cheerful, as if a circus had come to town, anxious to be shown. The marchers fill the broad semicircle in front of the Capitol, each group taking up its position in perfect order, as if the show had been rehearsed. The band, playing "Solidarity Forever" (which a newspaper woman beside me recognizes as "Onward Christian Soldiers"), steps out in front. It's a curious little band, made up of martini-horns, drums, cymbals and a lyre that goes tinkle, tinkle. It plays cheerfully and well, led by a drum major with a red tasseled banner on the end of his staff, and repeats again and again "The Red Flag," "Solidarity" and other tunes variously identified by people in the crowd. Above the heads of the marchers are banners with slogans printed out: IN THE LAST WAR WE FOUGHT FOR THE BOSSES: IN THE NEXT WAR WE'LL FIGHT FOR THE WORKERS . . . $150 CASH . . .FULL PAY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF. The squad commanders stand out in front like cheerleaders at a football game and direct the chanting: We Demand — Unemployed Insurance, We Demand—Unemployed Insurance, WE DEMAND—UNEMPLOYED INSURANCE.

A deep-throated echo comes back from the Capitol façade a few beats later than each shout. It's as if the statues and the classical-revival republican ornaments in the pediment were shouting too.

A small group leaves the ranks and advances across the open space toward the Senate side. All the tall cops drawn up in such fine order opposite the hunger marchers stick out their chests. Now it's coming. A tremor goes over the groups of statuary so tastefully arranged on the steps. The tear-gas pistols glint in the sun. The marchers stand in absolute silence.

Under the portal at the Senate entrance the swinging doors are protected by two solid walls of blue serge. Cameramen and reporters converge with a run. Three men are advancing with the demands of the hunger marchers written out. They geants, gold and silver braid of the Capitol and metropolitan police. A young fellow with a camera is hanging from the wall by the door. "Move the officer out of the way," he yells. "Thank you. . . . A little back please, lady, I can't see his face. . . . Now hand him the petition."

"We're not handing petitions, we're making demands," says the leader of the hunger marchers. Considerable waiting around. The Sergeant-at-Arms sends word they can't be let in. Somebody starts to jostle, the cops get tough, cop voices snarl. The committee goes back to report while the band plays the "International" on martini-horns and lyre.

Meanwhile in the Senate Chamber everybody stands while the chaplain asks Almighty God to instill into the hearts of the Senators "a Christlike tenderness for the overborne and heavy-laden." The Senators' heads are bowed over their desks, their faces are, as they used to say in oldtime magazine stories, a study. A thin yellow mantislike Senator, to the obvious disgust of many of his colleagues, starts reading a report of the committee on elections, to the effect that no conclusion has been reached in regard to the two contested seats. As for Senator Heflin, he seems to be sitting in his seat in spite of the contest, large as life in a white vest, a patent-medicine salesman if I ever saw one. He has a look of placid doggedness on his face. The other termites will have trouble ejecting him from the hill.

Over in the House, things are more animated. The representatives are electing their speaker. On the Democratic side they are licking their chops. Every new vote for John Nance Garner (they say he squirms whenever he hears his middle name) brings the fleshpots nearer. The lean years are over. When he's elected the Democrats break out in whoops, "the rebel yell" giggles a newspaper man. "Don't cheer, men, the poor devils are dying," cries a reporter with a breath like a distillery. In the press gallery they are laughing. Down on the floor the Republicans are taking the gentlemanly attitude. At length, amid cheering and applause, a stocky white-haired fresh-faced man, who looks like a prosperous wheat farmer, is led down the center aisle by four of his colleagues. The gentleman from Texas has a determined, mean mouth, set in a countenance strikingly devoid of warmth, generosity, intelligence, feeling, whatever it is that makes the human features better to look at than a paving stone. From the press gallery you can see the faces of the representatives all too clearly. Except for a few women and a couple of little girls who have been brought by their papas, there are not more than a dozen faces you can look at with pleasure out of almost five hundred; everywhere the close-set eyes full of small chicanery, the pursed, self-righteous mouth drawn down at the corners, the flabby self-

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After the representatives of the sovereign ward-heelers, even the ladies of the W.C.T.U., who are holding "exercises" among the frightened statuary of the rotunda, look charming and warm-hearted. They are hanging a wreath on a large white lady in a flowing gown modeled in castile soap, whose name I believe was Willard. They are in Washington to make a last stand against the demon rum.

Out of the termite hill, the Washington streets are unusually cheery. People seem to have gotten a sort of release out of the parade of the hunger marchers and the toodletinkle of the lyre and the martini-horns. It's a magnificent cloudless day. We follow the parade in a taxi. The taxi-driver said they'd already been to the White House and had yelled their demands at President Hoover through a megaphone. The Washingtonians seem to feel about it like children in class when somebody from outside has come in and sassed the teacher. Even the cops are smiling.

We catch up outside of the A. F. of L. building. The band is there and the marchers are lined up chanting and singing. A delegation has gone in to beard Green in his den. Marchers shout for the key of Billy Green's cellar, somebody starts the chant "WE DON'T WANT BOOZE, WE WANT BREAD." One man keeps yelling "Down with William Green, the lady miscellaneous." Everybody feels that the serious part of the show is over, now for the comedy relief. The motorcycle cops and the big shots in gold braid want their dinner, but they're smiling. Everybody's out for a good time, although the wind's beginning to blow up cold. Finally the delegation comes out, announces that William Green was sore as a pup, bawled them out for a lot of dirty Communists with their pockets full of Moscow gold, and told them to get the hell out. The marchers boo and march on.

Later there was a meeting in the Washington Auditorium. A good many Negroes attended. The marchers huddled in their seats tired, many of them falling asleep where they sat. Out in the lobby Brigadier General Glassford, who had handled the police end of the program, stood around beaming. On the platform the marchers' leaders looked pleased, too. When the band played the "International," all the newspaper men got to their feet. Speeches went on and on, though the speakers were hoarse from days of riding in springless trucks and much shouting of slogans. For the first time, in the faces of the men and women sitting drowsily in the dimly lit auditorium, you could feel something that reached out of the curious never-never land of Washington, D. C. It was hope, hunger, despair, the mills, the mines, the train yards, the brokers' offices back where these people had come from, that were real, not this antiquated mirage of a Greco-Roman republic set among the fine lawns and the magnolia trees of the Washington parks. When I left the ting in the audience in mufti, placidly smoking his pipe, while Weinstone thundered a Daily Worker editorial into the mike.

Downstairs in the Auditorium a dance marathon was going on. Surrounded by empty seats a few putty-faced boys and girls were feebly jiggling their feet to lethargic jazz played by a discouraged orchestra. They'd been at it for ninety hours. A young man in a white sweater bearing the letters NATIONAL PRODUCTS COMPANY had keeled over onto his platinum-blond partner's neck. She was holding him up as she danced and trying to revive him with an occasional pecking kiss. When the broadcasting hour came, the orchestra revived a little. A boy in a green sweater was held up to the microphone and crooned breathlessly into it for a while, his feet still moving. The announcer announced a bargain matinee next day, when between eight and four two ladies would be admitted for the price of one. A girl got the mike next and sang a little, while the announcer put his arm around her enthusiastically. Then the faint gyrations of the couples started up again. Anyway the jazz age is dead.

JOHN DOS PASSOS.

Tree and Tower

Always, at last, the architect discerns
Doom implicit in the shaft he rears,
Treason tunneling the roots of stone.
Something denies him; something turns
Inexorably toward ruin, slowly shears
His towers away to leave him frustrate and alone.

Earth is a patient usurer; earth will furnish
Slabs of herself to fashion to man's dream:
Timber and granite, glittering steel and glass.
Always, in shaft and beam,
She sows rebellion. Like the leaf they tarnish,
And wither, like the grass.

Leaves are their kin, and like the leaf's their prime
Is brief; for tree and tower, sired of loam,
Hunger obscurely to be home.
This thin shrill air is famine in their veins.
They will lie down with earth in their good time.
Nothing remains. . . .

Except the stubborn frenzy of the builder,
Recurring still, and by the old illusion
Still fired and fed; so, where the tragic bones
Of older towers and generations molder,
Babel he rears anew. And still confusion
Dissolves the stones.

Always the shaft that crumbles, hour by hour;
Autumn incipient in the April flower—
Still the renascent Tree, the timeless Tower.

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The Jumping-Off Place

THE CORONADO BEACH HOTEL was built by the California millionaire John Spreckels and opened in 1887. Spreckels had made his money in Hawaiian sugar, and in 1887 the United States signed a treaty with the Hawaiian king—a treaty which guaranteed to the Americans exclusive use of the harbor at Honolulu.

In the same year the first vestibule train was put on the tracks by George Pullman and the revolt of the Apaches under Geronimo, the last attempt of the Indians to assert their independence, had been put down by the government and the Indians penned up in reservations forever; the American Federation of Labor had just been founded, Kansas and Nebraska were parching with a drought and Henry George's campaign in New York was the occasion for radical demonstrations; Grover Cleveland was in the middle of his first term and threw the capitalists into consternation by denouncing the protective tariff, and an Interstate Commerce Act designed to curb the rapacity of the railroads was being put through by the small business men and farmers; inquiries into the practices of the trusts were being gotten under way in Congress and the Standard Oil Company, entering the drilling and pumping field, was embarked on the final stage of its triumph.

The Coronado Beach Hotel must represent the ultimate satisfaction of the dreams of the architects of the eighties. It is the most magnificent example extant of the American seaside hotel as it flourished in that era on both coasts; and it still has its beauty as well as its magnificence. White and ornate as a wedding-cake, clean, polished and trim as a ship, it makes a monument not unworthy to dominate the last blue concave dent in the shoreline before the United States stops and the Mexican Republic begins.

The bottom layer of an enormous rotunda, white and slit all around with long close windows like one of those spinning toys that children put strips of figures in to make them seem to move, is surmounted, muffled and almost smothered by a sort of immense bonnet consisting of a red roof, a second layer of smaller windows and a broad red cone like an inverted peg-top with two rows of little dormers peeping and blinking out like eyes and, just below the peg, the white railing of an observation tower partly extinguished by a red cone of its own, from which at the top of a tall white flagpole flies an American flag. Behind this extends the main body of the hotel, a lovely delirium of superb conical red cupolas; red roofs with little white-lace crenellations; a fine white clothlike texture of shingles; little steep flights of outside stairs and little outside galleries with pillars, white as the trickling protrusive dormers like the irregular natural budding of a sea-hydra.

At the foot of the steps of the principal entrance, brass compass-points are inlaid in the pavement; and broad white brass-edged stairs lead up, between white lathe-turned banister-rungs and railings, to white screen doors with polished brass handles and thin brass rods.

Inside, the hotel includes a large quadrangle, admirably planted and beautifully gardened: against grass kept tender and vivid green by slowly revolving sprays, a fine harmony of magenta begonias, vermilion salvia, crimson coxcomb, bouquet-like bushes of rose-red hibiscus and immense clumps of purple bougainvillea trained high up the stems of tall trimmed palms, which stand in mounds of green fern or myrtle. The trees are carefully labeled with Latin names, as in a botanical garden. In the middle is a low polygonal summerhouse, vine-embowered and covered with rough bark, inside which a boy chalks up on a blackboard the latest stock-market quotations, while interested male guests of the hotel sit around and watch them in silence.

This courtyard has real dignity and brilliance: with its five tiers of white-railinged porches like decks, its long steep steps like companionways, its red ladders and brass-tipped fire-hose wound on red-wheeled carts around corners, the slight endearing list of its warped floors and the thin wood columns that rise at the bottom from smooth flagstones level with the ground, it manages to suggest both an ocean liner and the portico of a colonial mansion. As you look out from one of the higher galleries at the green tops of the exotic tame palms and the little red ventilators spinning in the sun, you feel that you can still enjoy here the last moment before the power of American money, swollen though it was with sudden growth, had finally turned its back altogether on the human tastes and habits of the old non-mechanical world.

In the lobby you walk as on turf in the thickest softest red carpeting ever stepped on. There are wicker chairs; soft plush couches; panels of greenish-bluish tapestries where noble ladies with round pulpy faces take their pleasance in Elysian boskage; and a masterpiece of interior ornament, elaborate and not easily named, but combining mirrors covered with yellow curlicues, yellow-varnished rows of banister-rungs and a stained-glass window of red poinsettias.

In the spacious, round and many-windowed dining-room, where yellow-shaded lamps and candles light white tablecloths, old respectable gentlemen and ladies eat interminable American-plan meals. After dinner, they sit on couches and talk quietly,

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You can wander through long suites of rooms amid little stiff marble-topped tables, hanging electric lamps in the shape of enormous yellow coronets, hooks with sheets of stock-market quotations on the stairs going down to the barbershop, darkish unlivable in-between chambers with closed-up grates, dark shiny mahogany mantelpieces and twin vases cold as funeral urns.

In the rotunda you come upon a convention of the California Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. (The General Federation of Women's Clubs was organized about two years after the opening of the Coronado Beach Hotel.) The business and professional women are fussing on the outskirts of the palatial ballroom: "I've just seen Mildred and she hasn't done anything about the corsages yet! Do you think we ought to give them to all the officers or just to the incoming ones?" In their conclave they are reading aloud and debating proposed amendments to innumerable by-laws. They have undertaken to raise a fund of $20,000 and they sing a song about it to the tune of "John Brown's Body":

Twenty thousand dollars by nineteen thirty-four!
Twenty thousand dollars by nineteen thirty-four!
Twenty thousand dollars by nineteen thirty-four!
Our fund is marching on!
Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!
Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!
Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!
Our fund is marching on!

They are not quite sure what they are going to do with it when they get it; but they have arranged a speaking contest at which a speaker from each district will be given three minutes to offer suggestions on "How Can the Income on $20,000 Be Used to the Greatest Advantage of the Federation?"

The new hotel at Agua Caliente across the border, where people go to see the Mexican races, has taken a good deal of the trade from the Coronado Beach Hotel; but people still come from all over the country to San Diego across the bay.

The Americans still tend to move westward and many drift southward toward the sun. San Diego is the extreme southwest point of the United States; and since our real westward expansion has come to a standstill, it has become a veritable jumping-off place. On the West coast today the suicide rate is twice that of the Middle Atlantic coast, and since 1911 the suicide rate of San Diego has been the highest in the United States. Between January, 1911, and January, 1927, over five hundred people killed themselves there. The population in 1930 was only about 148,000, having doubled since 1920.

For one thing, a great many sick people come here. The rate of sickness in San Diego is 24 percent of the population to 6 percent for the population of the whole country. The climate of Southern California, so widely advertised by Chambers of ably rather unhealthy with its tepid and enervating days and its nights that get suddenly cold, brings invalids to San Diego by the thousand. If they have money to move about and have failed to improve in the other health centers, the doctors send them to San Diego as a last resort, and it is not uncommon for patients to expire immediately on being unloaded from the train. Furthermore, the victims of "ideational" diseases like asthma—diseases which are partly psychological—have a tendency to keep moving away from places, under the impression that they are leaving the disease behind. And when they have finally come to San Diego, they are cornered, there is nowhere else to move on to. According to the psychoanalysts, the idea of the setting sun suggests to them the idea of death. At any rate, of the five-hundred-odd suicides during the period of fifteen years mentioned above, 70 percent were put down to "despondency and depression over chronic ill health."

Then there are the people who do not fit in, in the conventional American communities where they live, who have heard that life is free and relaxed in San Diego. There at last their special psychological bents or their eccentric sexual tastes will be recognized, allowed latitude. It is certain that many such people in San Diego find the company they are looking for; but if they fail to, if they still seem different from other people and unable to accept life on the same terms, they may get discouraged and decide to resign. And then there are the people who have done something they are ashamed of or something which would disgrace them in the eyes of their friends in the place from which they originally came: San Diego is not quite large enough so that the people of any of the better-off or middle-class social groups don't all know each other and follow each other's doings with the attentive interest of people in a small town. If your scandal overtakes you and breaks, your whole circle knows about it; and if you are sensitive, you may prefer death. And then there are the people who are actually wanted by the police. During September, the city was being searched for the New York beer-war hero who had turned his machine-gun on some children. California has been a hide-away for gangsters in trouble in other parts of the country ever since Al Capone came here.

Then there are the people who have lost most of their money and who have been told that San Diego is cheap, but who find that it is not so cheap as they supposed. Then there are the girls (married young in this part of the world) deserted by husbands or lovers, and the sailors and naval officers who have had enough of the service.

Since the depression, the rate seems to have increased. In 1926 there were fifty-seven suicides in San Diego. During nine months of 1930, there were seventy-one and between the beginning of January and the end of July, 1931, there have already been thirty-six. Three of these latter are

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or money"; two to "no work"; one to "ill health, family troubles and no work"; two to "despondency over financial worries"; one to "financial worry and illness"; one to "health and failure to collect"; and one to "rent due him from tenants." The doctors say that some of the old people who have been sent out here but whose source of income from their relations has recently been cut off, kill themselves out of pride rather than go to the poorhouse.

These coroner's records in San Diego are melancholy reading. You seem to see the last blind, futile, feeble effervescence of the great burst of the American adventure. Here these people, so long told to "go West" to escape from poverty, ill health, maladjustment, industrialism and oppression, discover that, having come West, their problems and diseases still remain and that there is no further to go. Among the sand-colored power plants and hotels, the naval outfitters and waterside cafés, the old spread-roofed California houses with their fine close grain of yellow or gray clapboards—they come to the end of their resources in the empty California sun. Brokers and bankers, architects and citrus ranchers, farmers, housewives, building contractors, salesmen of groceries and real estate, proprietors of pool rooms, music stores and hotels, marines and supply-corps lieutenants, molders, machinists, oil-well drillers, auto mechanics, carpenters, tailors, soft-drink merchants, cooks and barbers, teamsters, stage drivers, longshoremen, laborers—mostly Anglo-Saxon whites, with a considerable element of Danish, Swedish and German and a sprinkling of Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, Negro, Indian and Filipino—ill, retired or down on their luck—they stuff up the cracks of their doors in the little boarding-houses that take in invalids and turn on the gas; they go into their back sheds or back kitchens and swallow Lysol or eat ant-paste; they drive their cars into dark alleys and shoot themselves in the back seat; they hang themselves in hotel bedrooms, take overdoses of sulphonal or barbital, stab themselves on the municipal golf-course; or they throw themselves into the placid blue bay, where the gray battleships and cruisers of the government guard the limits of their enormous nation—already reaching out in the eighties for the sugar plantations of Honolulu.

EDMUND WILSON.

Regionalism and Sectionalism

THE TWO WORDS—they appear in almost every essay on the relation of literature to American society that I have read in the last three years, and in most of the volumes of criticism. What do they mean? Perhaps nothing very definite. But there is in them a core of reality; they stand for points of speculation in the modern mind. What is a sectional writer? If he is merely that, it is fairly certain that he is a bad writer. In any case, the sectional writer has a point of view which is in some recognizable sense related to the beliefs historically identified with the community of his birth or rearing. And this definition may carry the added significance of conscious preference or dislike for those beliefs. Now literary regionalism, on the other hand, I think most people will agree, is less self-conscious, less abstract and philosophical; it is often a conscious program, but it is turned in upon itself; a cultivation of the local color, the local characters, the local customs, of the community for their own sake. Sectionalism, however, aggressively compares these features of itself with those of some other community. It is by necessity a doctrine, philosophical at its rare best, at its worst boastful propaganda. Sectionalism is thus a kind of politics, a set of social values; but regionalism is, or should be, self-contained and unaware of whatever value it may have.

I have read but little of the already prodigious

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in the last decade; I have read enough to know that there are writers and, I believe, even groups and societies, devoted to a regional program. On the social and economic side the universities are taking it up; last summer there was a Round Table on Regionalism at the Institute for Public Affairs which meets annually at the University of Virginia. I could not attend that Round Table, but I am told that economic and industrial problems, which are of a political nature, were discussed as a part of the regional problem. This is a question of terms; for the purposes of this essay I prefer to call the deliberate distribution of industries, for social ends in their appropriate places, sectionalism. By this I do not imply that the states from Maryland to Texas are a section: they are many sections, just as the "North" is a group of sections whose interests should be severally protected from the haphazard impulses of industrial capitalism. The instrument of local protection is politics. By regionalism, then, I mean only the immediate, organic sense of life in which a fine artist works. The distinction is purely for convenience, but in whatever terms, I think it must be observed if we are to have orderly procedure in either politics or the arts.

One weakness of regionalism, as I define it, is a provincial vice—antiquarianism. There is the New England village of Henry Ford, and in the South there are genealogy and the Confederate

features in themselves; the fault is the use made of them. Writers naïvely set out to "express" a community—in some sense undreamed of by the philosopher of Expressionism. They get out the documents, living and dead, animate and inanimate, of their localities, and give them expression. Such writing is nearly always stillborn, for it is documentary, and the author may be deceiving himself in believing that the material has some vital *rapport* with his own moral temper. About ten years ago the Poetry Society of South Carolina, led by Miss Josephine Pinckney and Mr. Dubose Heyward, revived in poetry the natural background of their society: this, as I shall show, was a sectional performance, a worthy and patriotic attempt to get intimidated Southerners interested in their own country. It had strategic value at the moment because it prepared the ground for a purer treatment of the Southern scene. But as literature it was abnormal; it was too self-conscious; it was a mixture of a sectionalism and regionalism, with folklore and antiquarianism stirred in by main force.

Now it is difficult to disentangle this expressive motive for writing, this transfer of the popular notion of self-expression to the whole community, from that other desire of modern writers to connect themselves with a tradition. For that is the second regional fallacy—the belief that regionalism and tradition are the same. They have no necessary relation, yet there is a way of looking at regionalism and tradition which brings them close together. They are the same thing when an author writes about his own region from the point of view of its traditions; with so little self-consciousness that he can see the past and the present as one, and can grasp the surrounding life, with its implications in the past, as a whole. An author may, like Henry James, be traditional without being regional, and the very converse is true of Mr. Sherwood Anderson's recent books about southwestern Virginia. The American writer of distinction who is both regional and traditional is Miss Elizabeth Madox Roberts.

For a genuine tradition must on the whole be unconsciously operative: in literature it is the writer's decorum in the widest sense, a powerful instinct of selection and arrangement; it is those ways of feeling, those convictions of propriety, those ways of speaking, of which the writer himself is hardly aware, and from which he cannot escape. More generally tradition is the knowledge of life that we have not had to learn for ourselves, but have absorbed out of the life around us. Its chief value, in literature as in living, is its economy; it releases the individual from the necessity to learn from the ground up all the mechanics of living, all the hard, trivial fundamentals; it gives us fixed procedures that we can rely on in the larger pursuit of the good life. It permits the detachment very other art so much requires. For letters, as distinguished from sculpture and painting, demand not only perceptions of things, but judgments about them. No man in one lifetime can construct out of the air an adequate system of judgments about life, and not at the same time atrophy his powers of contemplation, of seeing things, in so far as we are permitted to see them, as they are. This is the plight of American fiction, the plight of Mr. Dreiser; there is nothing that he can assume, because he does not know a kind of life where people assume anything. We cannot be constantly judging the moral value of human actions and emotions and at the same time see them purely and objectively; we must take some kinds of conduct as inevitable, for our framework of action and feeling, if we are to escape the punishment of having to invent our conduct, a barbaric thing indeed, as we go along. This must all be taken for granted and we must barely be aware that we take it so. That is tradition. How does tradition resemble regionalism? What is the relation between regionalism and sectionalism?

To go back a little: tradition has nothing to do with "expressing" a region, though of course tradition is always local in origin. The most traditional of writers can use all of his personal tradition, it is indeed inescapable that he should use it, without ever writing about the society, the region, the nation, from which his tradition is derived. To write traditionally is not to use local color or one's past; it is the assumption that people up to a certain point will behave in a manner to which one is accustomed, and that one's grasp on human emotions and actions is in the end the only possible grasp. To write traditionally is to approach the chosen subject matter with an instinct for its meaning, rather than with an abstract theory about it or with an air of contriving for oneself all the properties of the scene.

From this point of view a great deal of regional literature is the very contradiction of traditional writing. A self-conscious regionalism destroys tradition with its perpetual discovery of it; makes it clumsy and sterile. And regionalism in this sense, when it merges with sectionalism, is death to literature. Sectionalism is politics; it is aggressive and abstract, and has as its true sphere a field of action which is hostile to art. The two stages of the regional-sectional approach to literature are both fallacious, for regionalism is self-conscious and sectionalism is aggressive, and aggressive self-consciousness is the most conspicuous feature of a large part of contemporary Southern writing, and of much of the writing from the Middle West. If regionalism have any value for writers, it is high time to correct its errors, and to define it more generally as its innocent brother, tradition. For tradition, even a social tradition, is by nature private and it should not be put up on a billboard

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Because the South of all parts of this country more nearly preserves a tradition than any other, I will further illustrate the distinction between regionalism and tradition by means of four Southern authors. Mr. T. S. Stribling and Mr. Paul Green, a novelist and a dramatist, very different from each other in talent and methods, are regional writers; that is to say, neither is concerned with fundamental human action so much as with its conscious social significance. They do not assume that the ordinary social relations of their regions are at least as inevitable as some other imaginable ones; the social backgrounds of these two writers have the air of being very special. And the reader is forced to wish that the social structure might be changed; he cannot look steadily at the action for thinking of the debased *mores* of society; for a different social system, rather than a different human nature, would presumably make the story less harrowing. This is regionalism tainted with sectionalism (I must add that I have great respect for the literary skill of Mr. Stribling and Mr. Green). For sectionalism is not always chauvinism; it may be, as it evidently is in these two writers, just the opposite of unreasoning devotion to one's community. Literary sectionalism is merely a preoccupation with one's own social background which, whether we love it or hate it, we do not take for granted.

The two other Southern writers, Miss Roberts and Mr. Stark Young, approach their materials in a perfectly traditional manner. Both take the social order of which they write as final, or rather they take the particular moment of society, with its unique balance of order and disintegration, as the inevitable moment for the characters of their choice.[1] The attitude is normal, that of Mr. Green and Mr. Stribling abnormal; the normal literary attitude is direct contemplation of character and emotion, of all the ideas and desires that sustain character, and not social structure in itself. The abnormal attitude has primarily a documentary interest in its subject.

This consciously regional or sectional attitude which, by becoming abstract and social in its outlook, may even undertake to defend tradition, can never be, properly speaking, traditional in character. For tradition is not a defense of tradition; nor is it any previous state of society whatever: all that a tradition has to do with the past is its origin somewhere in time, and this is strictly a historical conception. A real tradition is individual, it is a special organization of the individual sensibility that liberates the intelligence through the possession of habitual responses to life that are, moreover, relevant to the conduct of other men.

What of sectionalism?—which no intelligent man who understands the nature of literature will lightly dismiss? It is in itself neither good nor bad, and if I have implied that it is, I must speedily correct myself, and do it justice. It is wholly pernicious when it is confused with tradition; and the feeling of sectional loyalty or hatred, a feeling involved in the regional sense, but of anti-traditional character, is one of the worst motives for attempting to write literature. I have said that the desire for self-expression may be attributed by a "regional" writer to his whole community. Such a writer labors with a secular ambition, a concealed motive to power, or the reformer's instinct, and he may unload upon literature what is properly a political intention.

Now if tradition, or the liberation of the intellect by a settled way of life—for genuine tradition is the liberator, not the confiner—if tradition is the best condition of literature, then sectionalism, or a preoccupation with the interests of one's community, is the starting point of political philosophy. And it is here that tradition and politics join; each has its invaluable place and each is subversive of order when out of place. They are finally identical in their purposes. For sectionalism is a philosophy of the community of interest (the United States taken together are not a community of interest), and tradition is the perpetual participation in the community by the individual. Sectionalism, or politics, is public tradition, and tradition is private and unconscious sectionalism: the one is general, aggressive, active; the other, particular and richly varied, passive, and responsive. Mere tradition in politics may be hostile to its true interests; the federal tradition among Southern politicians is a private habit carried blindly into public life at the expense of the self-respect of the Southern states. The effect of sectionalism in literature we have seen; it falsifies the creative impulse with the motives of social action, with motives that are vaguely political.

Instead of regionalism and sectionalism, the best terms, the least confusing of the terms describing this realm of meaning, are undoubtedly tradition and politics. They are the historical terms, and refer to the two "estates" out of which modern society has developed, The polarities of medieval society were the barons and the priests —the men of action and the men of sensibility, the politicians and the traditionalists. The terms go even deeper than that. For any philosophy that pretends to comprehensiveness, and is not intimidated by the propaganda of modern science, will observe that intellectual order has always been founded in a dualism of action and contemplation. Our modern chaos is largely due to the mixture of a little politics in literature, and a little literature, which is incapable of action, in politics.

We have politicians and we have men of letters. Pure specimens of either class are rare. Our politicians are not statesmen; they are not [illegible]

[1] Some critics of the pragmatist persuasion, notably Mr. Kenneth Burke in "Counter-Statement," argue that for any writer to take a social order as "final" is implicit propaganda for that society. This can be easily granted, but the point has [illegible]

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individual made up of all individuals; they know only the instrumental aspect of the public thing which is economics. Their concern is power, conceived quantitatively and not politically, industrially and not morally. The men of letters are not even a class; they are necessarily, being men of sensibilities, all individuals.

Perhaps out of the right instinct for an art that does not interest the public at large, out of anxiety for the soundness and vigor of the greatest of the arts, they may be roused to defend it, and to defend the kind of life that makes a literature possible. To defend tradition, of course, is to violate it; only temporary emergency would justify it. They must not, moreover, confound the two impulses, the unconscious impulse of tradition and the aggressive impulse of politics. So long as we lack political leadership in its proper place, we must take it where it can be found, and the men of letters are alone sufficiently disinterested, if they were only prepared, to undertake the task. The readiest instrument to their hand is criticism, with its power of intellectual clarification, but even here, unless they understand criticism, they might make a great mistake. It would be a pity for them to debase criticism with propaganda and to delude themselves with the belief that it is ever possible to do anything for fine letters by ceasing to practise them. ALLEN TATE.

Washington Notes

Democrats and Big Business—Taxation without Ratiocination—Party Unity—Roosevelt on the First Ballot—The Grand Old Pauper

THOUGH the first session of the Seventy-second Congress is well under way, the forecasters of chaos and confusion, of whom I was one, have as yet no way of judging the accuracy of their predictions. But chaos is on its way. The expectation that the first weeks of the session would be a reckless rushing about and a wild clanging of gongs was, of course, not well founded. It is when Congress comes to grips with various problems that the discipline manifest at the start will vanish and the divisions appear.

At present the Democratic leaders in both House and Senate are making efforts to impress the country with a party solidarity calculated to inspire confidence in the "business interests." How solicitous is the conservative and dominant element of the Democrats that the business interests should not be alarmed! How tender are their intentions toward them! How anxious are they to avoid anything that might discourage economic recovery! What this actually means is that the present management of the party, which is actually a big-business management, leans heavily toward Mellon's taxation theory that more people should be taxed rather than a few taxed more. This idea so strongly commended itself in 1923 to the rich news- [illegible] banking opinion that was the basis of Coolidge's popularity, the real reason for calling the aged Andrew what no one calls him now, "the greatest Secretary of the Treasury since Alexander Hamilton." It has been a long time since anyone referred to him that way.

What I am trying to point out is that the gentlemen in control of the Democratic machinery, plus various heavy contributors in New York and party counselors with strong banking and industrial connections, are doing their level best to force the party to adopt a program that will distribute the tax burden more generally, rather than measurably increase it in the higher brackets. They are—these New York counselors and advisers—willing to have the rates raised on the large fortunes to some extent, but they regard it as "unsound and unsafe," as "confiscatory" and "economically wrong," to make taxing the rich for the benefit of the poor the major theme in a Democratic taxation program.

If there is any real difference in this theory from the administration proposals, I am unable to see it. The Democratic press in the East will, of course, approve this general course, as it has before, and the Democratic proposals along this line will be strongly commended. I cite as an example of what is coming the enthusiastic praise which greeted the recent remarks of the Honorable Joseph T. Robinson, Democratic leader of the Senate. Mr. Robinson spoke in words of such cautious conservatism that they might have issued from the mouth of that really astute Treasury mind, Mr. Ogden L. Mills. Taxes were to be made as light as possible. Rates should not be imposed that would discourage the investment of money in productive enterprises. Business must not be unduly burdened, etc. It was, indeed, in the best Republican vein, and I am disclosing no secret when I say that it did not sit well on the minds of a good many more or less prominent Democrats in House and Senate.

This Democratic division will come not only on the taxation issue, but on the relief question. The same conservative forces in the party which are concerned lest business be alarmed by a taxation program are also united in their opposition to any form of the "dole." Affrighted at the word, they are in complete accord with Hoover's message on this subject and are insisting that the Democratic membership be lined up against any direct appropriations from the federal treasury to be used for food, shelter and clothing for the unemployed. On this proposal, too, Democratic unity will be smashed, as will the alleged unity among Republican regulars. There are a considerable number of both Democrats and Republicans favorable to the progressive relief proposals, who cannot be kept from voting for them, regardless of the shouts about the "dole." I do not know that this form of relief can pass both branches, and I feel reasonably sure that it cannot be passed over Hoover's inevitable veto. I am sure, however, that party lines on both sides will be broken by the vote.

The convening of Congress preceding the presidential campaign naturally has the effect of centering here in Washington the news concerning candidacies. Many of

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ventions, and their attitude toward aspirants is significant. Judging from those with whom I have talked on the Democratic side, Roosevelt has made headway in the last few weeks. The opposition to him has not abated. The race is not over, but there is much less confidence that he can be stopped. Practically the whole South and everything west of the Mississippi is for him, and if he holds his own state, it is difficult for me to see how he can be kept out of the nomination. His friends are beginning now to claim his nomination on the first ballot, to assert that he will have 800 votes when the convention opens, that Smith will present his name and Tammany solidly give him support.

It may work out that way, but if it does it will be because the rest of the country has put him over on the East. I particularly mean the before-mentioned business interests, which dominate the party management and can usually count upon delegations from Massachusetts, New Jersey, Maryland, Rhode Island, most of Pennsylvania and Illinois. To a large extent, the general knowledge of the kind and character of the influences against Roosevelt in New York and elsewhere has been his chief political asset. In saying this I am simply reflecting the views of Democratic Senators of the most practical type from the South and West. These men have no inherent love for Governor Roosevelt. What they say is that the general conviction that Raskob, Smith and Tammany do not want him gives him popularity in their states. He would, they say, be best for their "local ticket," which in the last analysis is what every politician is primarily concerned about.

Not long ago the movement to draft Newton D. Baker was given renewed impetus. Two great Ohio papers—one in Cleveland and the other in Cincinnati—came out strongly for him. The New York Times and other Democratic journals were sympathetic to the movement and there was, in general, sufficient response to show plainly that if Mr. Roosevelt bogs down at the last ditch or is blocked by the powerful fellows against him, Mr. Baker is the most likely nominee. However, he is doing a wise political thing in refusing to enter the Ohio primaries or in any way to encourage the movement. If he lent himself even a little to the game of the anti-Roosevelt leaders, he would destroy his possibility as the compromise candidate, it being quite clear that the Roosevelt forces would veto the man used to beat their choice.

Here, again, I am reflecting the sentiment of leading Democrats in Congress, in whose mind the question of who will be their nominee is naturally uppermost at this time and will stay uppermost throughout the session. Most of them think of little else. Incidentally, most of them are genuinely convinced that any Democrat will win next year.

As for the Republicans, that, indeed, is a sad story. They are a thoroughly dejected lot. With their ticket and their platform already known, they have little to do except hope for a return of prosperity and a succession of Democratic blunders. The immediate and pressing worry of the administration politicians is the condition of the party treasury. It is more or le[illegible] committee activities of the estimable Mr. Lucas, whose salary is said to exceed $20,000 a year, are being financed week by week, and the efforts to accumulate a fund are meeting with a most unprecedented lack of success.

By the time this piece appears, the Republican National Committee probably will have met and selected the convention city. Under the circumstances, the chances are that the honor will be sold to the highest bidder, the indisputable fact being that the party needs money as it has not needed it for years. There are various reasons for this painful predicament of the Grand Old Party, which, in former times had almost unlimited funds, but one of them undoubtedly is the general belief that Mr. Hoover will run again as a Dry on a Dry platform. Most of the large Republican contributors are Wet, and they are far more reluctant to contribute to a further continuation of the "experiment, noble in purpose" than they were before.

Speaking of Wets, an absurd idea being widely disseminated is that, because of the willingness expressed by various Dry leaders in Senate and House to permit a vote this session on one or more of the bills to modify or repeal the Volstead Act, a step will be taken in that direction. The reverse, of course, is true. The vote will show both House and Senate still overwhelmingly Dry, and no change of any sort is possible. Nevertheless, I shall be glad to see the vote. It will show something of the sentiment of the country and there will be some significant flops. Moreover, it will put some Dry members in a tough spot—for example, Leader Rainey, whose district out in Illinois has recently been redistricted. It used to be very Dry, but his suspicion now is that it is very Wet. It is horrid to have a suspicion like that and not be able to confirm it before the roll is called.

Washington. T. R. B.

Town Mélange

MR. JAMES REYNOLDS, at the Hackett Galleries, has an exhibition of work to which he has given the strangely unforgettable title of "Drawings from Homer." There are fourteen of these. Hera and Zeus; Polyxena, who was sacrificed on Achilles' grave; Demeter, the gods' mother; Medea of Colchis; the Delphic Pythia; Diokles, with the black armor of Ethiopia; Antiope; Diomedes; Endymion, asleep in the summer night, his flocks grazing about him; and Diana, Pallas, Achilles and Bellerophon.

These drawings, gray, sanguine, black, as they happen to be in the diverse pieces, are evocative not so much of Homer and epics as of an old decoration that came down from the memory of these early gods and heroes. They are full of a curious freedom and plenty as to the talent behind them, of modern exoticism and modern archaism. They are at the same time both grave and erotic; they are subtly and beautifully sensuous; and the dream they evoke is the dream of Antinous' legend, faces with something Asiatic in those heavy drowsing brow and eyes that passionate memory gave to the images of this Bithynian youth. The drawings have also a great chic, like that so

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of qualities brings these drawings into a decorative value most unusual.

Miss Martha Graham, in her first recital of the season, offered to a packed and applauding house a program very rich and intense, new compositions like the "Dithyrambics," with its far-going modern forms, sometimes fine and astonishing, sometimes confusing and of an uncertain fluency and accent, to such repeated numbers as the "Primitive Mysteries." To those who have seen Miss Graham's art such comment as I am about to make might be worth while, otherwise it can mean little. The old classical dancing had its terms, laws and points; and critics writing of it, like the critics of boxing, bullfighting or baseball, had a more reliable ground on which to speak. Modern dancing, carried as far as Miss Graham carries her art, still waits for a full and exact critical method to deal with it. The comment is this: there has come something lately, perhaps gradually all along, who knows? into Miss Martha Graham's work, a certain freedom and relaxation, you could almost say spiritual generosity or flowering, a fresh happiness or discovery, something which no one can describe, but which is like some inner possibility of light and the way ahead. I have seen few things ever in the theatre more beautiful than the first number in the mysteries as it went this year, the Indian forms, solid in drawing and in composition as Diego Rivera at his best, the figure in white of the chief dancer, the motives of those groups and salutations, the foot above the shielding hands, the motives of worship and celebration. If this is of little value as dance criticism, because, as I said, of my lack of any method and my fear of mere muddling words and pure bluff, it is at least worth while as a means of letting the artist herself see—and in print—the record of her opening progress.

Miss Helen Hayes in the Molnar piece, "The Good Fairy," at the Henry Miller Theatre, shows a definite growth in her comedy method, not to speak of her looks, which bear the touch of that Hollywood skill in means and methods of pulchritude that leaves Broadway so far behind. Miss Hayes, whose hard work shows in her growing ease and skill with the points to be made and the tone to be kept, astonished also this year by the wholeness and sustained flow of her performance. Her playing still has moments of unneeded archness, appearing also even in her diction now and then—the way she will execute the *l* in such a word as "eleven," for example—which only diminishes the chance for chic in her comedy speech. But all her cue sense is remarkable, and she has arrived at a deftness in taking a point and making a comic shading that has only one rival on our stage, and that is Miss Ruth Gordon—we leave out Miss Fontanne, whose enlarging these latter seasons into such powers of serious tragedy, farce methods, pathos and a growing variety of styles has left us all amazed and asking ourselves just where in her art she may be headed, to what scope and heights.

Miss Gordon and Miss Hayes might provide an opportunity for one of those comparisons among artists by which stage discussion prospers and by which criticism exhibits its principles. This is not the moment for so long an

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way babes in arms and never such young ladies as rose to favor on chance, arrant blondness or the celebrated It, have grown solidly into their technique, and that with such growing maturity they have perceived the shortsightedness of their mannerisms, once useful enough in a world of tiny individualisms and the casual tripe of the vaunted so-called personality. Their mannerisms have grown very much less and their directness in their effects much more. It can be said of Miss Ruth Gordon that of the two she is far wittier, taking her performance as a whole; in her work the mind with a livelier insight sees the whole composition in which the role in hand consists; she can give to the whole performance a kind of bath of wit, within which the details and motives are seen and by which they get their comic shine. Of the two actresses Miss Hayes has still the larger scope; she could play a greater variety of roles with a degree of success.

If you go to the village of Anticoli, on a hill thirty miles from Rome, you will find the marks of many artists who have lived there, among them our great painter Maurice Sterne. Among the old houses where the studios have been established, you will come on the house where Mario Toppi lives. On the ground floor is the white-washed room, with its green vines here and there and the huge kitchen fireplace, where his mother, a magnificent old peasant woman, will be, busy or sitting with friends who have dropped in on their way past. On the third floor is the painter's studio, with a cot where he sleeps, with flowers or leaves wherever they will stand, and with the walls all covered with his paintings, painting done straight on to the hard plaster as if on parchment. The painter is unschooled and his technique has been built from the influences of artists he has known or admired and from the frescoes in the churches and chapels scattered over the country near, in the village sometimes, sometimes along the roads. Some of his work has about it no little of the pseudo, in effect at least, as if he had imitated, almost reproduced, those frescoed surfaces from which the paint has scaled long ago and only the lines of the composition and the faint remainder of old colors preserve the artist's thought. The drawing in these decorations of Mario Toppi's studio is primitive and delicate, sometimes patently sophisticated despite its naïve front; the color is soft and never anything but lovely; the whole harmony is captivating, and, now with real emotion, now with disarming shrewdness, persuasive. There are also smaller pictures. They are painted on wrapping paper, whose surface has the same hardness that old-fashioned plastering shows and that parchment provides, so that in them the drawing lines and the thin paint take with the same lovely harmony as in the painting on the studio walls.

The ideas in this painting are in the exact key with the method. They are sometimes really naïve, sometimes sophisticated; they are religious and entirely reminiscent of the local primitives, or are peasant life seen with this primitive line and color composition; or are fancies like that, for example, of the satyrs stealing the nymphs' clothing while the nymphs bathe in the stream beneath a willow; or are eclogues, small pictures tender and faint,

these subjects are not so much chosen, selected out of an Augustan taste, made up or reminiscent, as they are natural to the painter, native to the country he has known all his life, and true and immediate so far as concerns the people, the ceremonies, feasts, harvests and religion that he knows.

A gallery-full of these paintings by Mario Toppi are being shown now at the New Art Circle, 9 East Fifty-seventh Street, until the end of December. The subjects comprise many themes, the Madonna and Child, shepherd boys with their sheep, festivals, preparations for festivals, saints alone or in company with saints, nativities, and so on. Looking at the room of them, I am reminded of what Mario Toppi himself said to me one evening crossing the rough and open little *piazza* of his town. In a Roman exhibition, once, he said, where there were hundreds of modern pictures shown, room after room, with all their schools, their efforts to strike the attention, their colors and designs, he came into a room filled with pictures by Maurice Sterne. It was as if, he said, he had suddenly come on to peace, all profound, all harmony. Those were his exact words, and they show now when you see his paintings something of what he has at the back of his mind. Taken more or less superficially, these pictures are above all decorative, they fulfill that obligation remarkably. As to their content, it is almost impossible, seeing them thus in this town, not to believe them wholly sophisticated, not so delicate and naïve as they may seem to pretend. As a matter of fact, you cannot say where their knowledge and their naïveté begins and ends, for their roots belong in their own and so different land; but you can see their lovely and almost shy fine taste, and you can think of owning them with far more pleasure than many of the resounding ambitions that the painters will exhibit during the season.

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

Relief by Public Works

SIR: In view of the widespread feeling that a program of public works, undertaken by the federal government and financed by means of borrowed funds, would go far toward solving the unemployment problem this winter, it may not be impertinent to inquire whether employment was not sustained in the years of "prosperity" by an excessive indulgence in just such building and whether the collapse of these programs was not an important factor in bringing about the present situation.

From 1922 to 1926, activity in the building industry was one of the basic factors in the industrial expansion that occurred in those years. Building construction for private and public purposes of all kinds was in large volume and the industries supplying building materials were greatly stimulated Employment increased and many workers found jobs in those industries. Funds used to finance construction were available on comparatively easy terms through the money and capital markets and were borrowed in large volume by both private and public agencies. Issues of bonds by real-estate financing companies were frequent, numerous and large. Debts of local governmental agencies increased rapidly and the funds were used for road building and many other purposes. The period was characterized by an enormous volume of borrowing to finance construction of all kinds and the building trades as well as industries supplying the necessary materials provided employment for thousands of employees.

Today, as a result of excessive construction, many local governmental agencies that undertook large programs during this period becoming increasingly heavy and difficult to meet. Holders of the bonds in some instances have already experienced considerable depreciation in their investments. Among private and commercial builders foreclosures, sheriff sales, depreciation in values and defaults in interest payments are becoming increasingly numerous.

A second factor contributing to the "prosperity" of the "New Era" was the effect in the United States of increased loans to foreign borrowers in 1922-1929, particularly after 1924. Loans abroad were made for both commercial and public uses, but a large part of the loans for public purposes found its way into public construction, and the indirect effect of this was to stimulate industry in the United States in one way or another. . . . It is generally felt now that a part, at least, of the credit extended for these purposes was unwise and that the losses to investors are apt to be large.

The result of these building programs have undoubtedly been important factors in bringing about the present unemployment problem. Therefore, to look for a way out through borrowing by the federal government is equivalent to using as a cure for an industrial and social ill the things which contributed to bringing it about. The only difference in the process is in the change of the borrower from individuals and local governments in the United States and abroad to the federal government. In advocating programs of this sort, the consequences of the similar programs during the past ten years should not be disregarded.

Philadelphia, Pa. W. J. CARSON.

[The value of a program of national public works and bonding to relieve depression lies in its timing. If private construction is prone to overexpansion and contraction, public construction may be called in to help redress the balance.—THE EDITORS.]

Whittier and the Fighting Sinclairs

SIR: I am writing a life of John Greenleaf Whittier for Houghton Mifflin Company, and would like to hear from any one who has copies of letters by Whittier. If the originals are sent to me I shall return them by registered mail. In lieu of originals I would appreciate bona-fide copies.

I have also finished a book called "The Fighting Sinclairs," which is the story of a naval family from 1798 to 1865. It consists of biographical accounts of Commodore Arthur Sinclair, of the War of 1812, his three sons, Captain Arthur Sinclair, 2nd, Lieutenant George T. Sinclair and Surgeon William B. Sinclair, of the United States Navy and of the Confederate Navy, and of his five grandsons, Lieutenant Arthur Sinclair, 3rd, Midshipman George T. Sinclair, Jr., Lieutenant William C. Whittle, Midshipman William H. Sinclair and Midshipman William B. Sinclair, all of the Confederate Navy. I would like to hear from members of naval families who may have letters by the Sinclairs. My address is 731 Land Title Building, Broad and Sansom Streets, Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, Pa. ALBERT MORDELL.

Toys for Miners' Children

SIR: Will you invite readers of The New Republic to ransack their cellars—or penthouses—for dolls, games, mechanical toys, books and other children's playthings for the children of miners in the Kanawha Valley of West Virginia? Christmas parties are being held in a dozen of the coal camps where many families have been evicted from their homes and are living in tent colonies.

Parcels of toys should be mailed or expressed (prepaid) before December 18 to the Christmas Party Committee, c/o West Virginia Mine Workers' Union, Room 9, Old Kanawha Valley Bank Building, Charleston, West Virginia.

New York City readers who cannot send toys direct to Charleston may send or take them to the Pioneer Youth Shop, 350 Madison Avenue, Room 2101, New York City.

MARY FOX, for the League for Industrial Democracy,

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Cave Men of Capitalism

More They Told Barron, edited by Arthur Pound and Samuel Taylor Moore. New York: Harper and Brothers. 334 pages. $5.

Oh Yeah? edited by Edward Angly. New York: The Viking Press. 64 pages. $1.

"OH YEAH?" repeats what the capitalists say in public; "More They Told Barron" records what they say among themselves. Both books are precious historical documents for students or social theorists wishing to understand the mentality of the men who have dominated our economic system, that is to say, our whole society.

Barron, the founder and head of a powerful financial service, was a satellite of the financiers and was rich in his own right. But at heart he preserved something like a small, pure white flower somewhere in himself, an artist's detachment in viewing men and events. One can only presume that he had some moral reservations which made him note down the sayings of the mighty men who opened their more or less candid hearts to him. It was as if, in the end, he was not quite sure which was right, Marx or Schwab. The second volume of selections from Barron's notebooks goes back to the 1890's, the heroic age of American capitalism, when history was being made, as Beard has pointed out, not by our statesmen, but by the kings of iron, copper, oil, beef, railroads; it terminates in the era of prosperity after the World War. Everywhere the personages are unveiled a little, even unmasked, sometimes by mere ingenuousness, sometimes for inscrutable reasons of their own.

In spite of Barron's impassivity, a flood of light is shed upon the cave men of capitalism and their extraordinary technique. His fragmentary notations help us to trace the rise of many an industrial principality from its humblest beginnings in the picturesque, violent scene of the 1890's. Most often it was some shrewd Yankee man of money who, for a bagatelle, gained control of land, natural resources, a political concession, a patent or even a mere option. In the free scramble of laissez-faire, the acquisition made for $1,000 or $100,000 was promptly traded or floated in the stock market for millions. Soon the men of capital pounced upon new prizes which lay open to them—new concessions, inventions. In the free-for-all they fought or buncoed one another, stabbed their friends in the back. They gave no quarter; they had "absolutely no bowels whatsoever," as one banker says of a certain railroad leader, in Barron's notes. (The want of bowels is certainly a distinguishing feature of the primordial brutes of finance; and I note this, not out of moral tenderness, but simply to indicate how much they exceeded all the classical diagnoses of their social character.)

The strong men who survived said to one another again and again: "It is only by pooling that we can save ourselves." At other times they said: "Take what we offer or walk the plank." Thus the large railroads and industrial corporations were set up and financed. And in the random "indiscretions" of Barron, one may learn how these monopolies in oil, copper or iron schemed to grow larger still; how they raided and looted their rivals; how each planned to dominate its field unchallenged, until, as in the case of Standard Oil, all related industries or resources—even remote ones if they seemed to offer a chance for profit—were apparently captured.

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original spheres. Two Englishmen, Thomson and Houston, had furnished the company with the patents which were its chief wealth. But Charles S. Coffin, by his own admission to George Westinghouse, Jr., soon deprived Thomson and Houston of their proportionate share of stock, through his market manipulations. His next step was to invite competitors like Westinghouse to join him in a monopoly. "Why should I trust you, after what you tell me?" Westinghouse replied. But Coffin kept trying to build his monopoly, now lowering prices on electrical products in order to "knock out" all other electrical companies, now following a "boodle" policy of raising prices in order to take care of aldermen and lobbies. In his rational way, Coffin had estimated to the penny the price of political protection; in some cases it ran as high as 25 percent of the cost of his products. He dreamed of making the General Electric Company a bigger trust than Standard Oil, which in those days was supreme.

Standard Oil had bought the railroads that transported its petroleum and had obtained rebates, thus ruining its competitors, who paid three times as much in freight charges. Soon, with its rich profits, the "octopus" spread into all departments of industry; it held the whole country in terror. "How can you beat the Standard Oil party?" exclaimed James R. Keene, the famous stock speculator, to Barron. "They own all the insurance companies, banks and trust companies and all the shares. They have control of all the industries; they are getting all the railroads and will, in a few years, own the whole country."

But Standard Oil had to contend with rivals. We learn from one private estimate that $25,000,000 was spent in five years in the copper regions of Montana, for graft and newspaper influence. This was the warfare of thirty years ago, in which not only the Rockefeller and Morgan groups, but the moneyed interests of Europe as well, fought for control of the Western mines. As for labor, when they could not "manage" it, they declared war upon it. George Sheldon, a director of the North American Company, tells Barron proudly:

> We have had the biggest strikes in the country and fought them through. There is today not a union man in our employ, either in the Milwaukee Street Railway, the St. Louis Street Railway, at Detroit, or in our Virginia coal mines. . . . Many men were killed. I declared at Milwaukee that we had $15,000,000 of property there and we would lose every dollar of it before we would permit labor agitators to control the property.

It is all too apparent that the chief dangers which the captains of industry anticipated, as Schwab put it tersely, were "only from labor and legislation."

One would think that after having bribed politicians, strangled competitors, crushed labor, and reached "settlements" among themselves, the cave men would be free to sleep soundly. Alas, there was never tranquility for them. The values, the tactics which men like Rockefeller, H. H. Rogers, Morgan and Carnegie exemplified so brilliantly, were copied almost perfectly by their lieutenants and hirelings, who strove continually to knife them in the back. This eternal habit of treachery is the great blight within a system that rules only through force and fear. The pages of Barron become chiefly a chronicle of treason upon treason, at once melancholy and comic.

Again and again the pools that were formed to control commodities or stocks were betrayed by individual members

always be bought off: at 26 Broadway, headquarters of the Standard Oil men, there were queer persons who came and went unmolested, enjoying an income for life. Morgan would learn that his agent who presided over a Western railroad was looting it, or selling its stock against him in the market. Carnegie would return from abroad to find that Frick had cheated his company of $1,000,000. Or now we hear the president of the New Haven Railroad saying: "Morgan wanted to know if I would step down and out if I was given a retainer of $30,000 a year for five years." Or we perceive how, in a grudge-fight, "the Standard Oil people have set out to break William C. Whitney"—one of their own kin! "Lying is an art," exclaims James R. Keene. Another Wall Street luminary, F. H. Prince, points at the corporation lawyer, Lewis Cass Ledyard, as a man who "can kiss six hands at one time." In the next breath he relates of himself:

> I shook Mr. Morgan's hand and thanked him warmly for the great interest he was taking in me. . . . I knew at this time that he was doing everything in his power to ruin me, but I lay low and shall continue to play weak.

It has generally been assumed that the cave men of capitalism, by their talent, hastened the industrial transformation of the United States and distributed all the wonders and improvements of mechanization. But the cost of their participation, to the public of ultimate consumers, has never been calculated. Equally significant is the strange moral tone which they set, and which they acquired from the particular role they played in the public service.

Our cave men built and financed great railroads which, to be sure, often went into bankruptcy; but in the meantime we learn, through such a record as Barron's, of many specific instances in which they "loaded" their railroads with bad investments at high prices; milked them for "reorganization"; loaned money to them at 12 or 15-percent interest. They took an odd sort of pride in a good public-utility property: "The Consolidated Gas Company of New York gets eighty cents for gas which costs it forty cents all told. . . . The New York Edison Company gets six cents a kilowatt hour; cost is only two cents for manufacture and distribution." The head of a locomotive company bewails the fact that his engines are well made and last too long. The president of the New York Central Railroad complains because it turns out that "only the public is gaining" from a new contract for handling express freight. Finally the coming of the World War in 1914 and the realization that it may last for several years fills the industrialists with a happiness that is ill concealed. Bethlehem Steel takes $18 per three-inch shell, netting a profit of about 50 percent, in 1917. Government taxes will be enormous, but Schwab observes with glee: "We will earn $40 per share after all our charges and taxes. . . ."

In the end it appears that the cave men did not even know what to do with their money. They would use part of it to pay private detectives for guarding them night and day; part for charity intended to allay hatred and fear of them. Barron, grown old with his barons, follows them even into the dull haunts of their retirement.

The American capitalists of today, partly by inheritance and partly by their own efforts, have amassed greater wealth than their predecessors; they have shown more finesse in dealing with the public; but what they have cultivated especially is a type of optimistic rhetoric that would make their heavy-handed, tight-lipped ancestors turn over in their graves. "Oh, Yeah?"

magniloquence. Reading here of all the good things that Charlie Mitchell and Charlie Schwab predicted for us, just before Black Thursday, we may conclude that our great financial leaders are not infallible prophets. But after comparing these public utterances with the private remarks recorded in Barron's diary, and after reflecting that the new capitalists, for all their eloquence, have exactly the same interests and values as their fathers, we are seized with a more terrible suspicion. While these heroes of 1929 were reassuring us in public, were they, in private, selling us all short?

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON.

White-Collar Noose

Laugh and Lie Down, by Robert Cantwell. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.

USUALLY a supine character is chosen by our novelists as a representative American. The hero of "An American Tragedy" is wholly spineless. Erskine Caldwell's pimps, butchers and millhands—William Faulkner's bootleggers and lynchers—all share in the same tired violence and explosive inertia.

Kenneth and William McArdle, the chief characters in Robert Cantwell's "Laugh and Lie Down" belong to this willless class. (The title of the book is significant. Realism, in American literature today, has become the study of various kinds of fatigue.) Kenneth, the older brother, is a hard-working draftsman; William, who, like Kenneth, has white-collar nerves and sinews, is a factory hand on the night shift. Neither the drafting board nor the factory has given them any sort of handicraft satisfaction. Both brothers are in love with Berenice Adams, the daughter of a family supposed to have had money at one time and now anxious to keep up appearances. When he has to work around the house, Mr. Adams puts on a pair of overalls so as to look like a hired man. He is not anxious to have his daughter marry either of the McArdle boys; they have no money in the bank. She marries Kenneth and keeps it a secret.

William, for his part, has but one certitude: he doesn't want to work. He tries his hand at small-time bunco schemes. With Biddle, also a shoe-string opportunist, he opens up a sort of collecting agency. The two of them buy clothes and furniture on credit, then dun themselves on behalf of the business houses with which they dealt, and receive from the latter a commission of 33 1/3 percent for their services. Finally, the two of them meet Benny, a hard-boiled crook who has succeeded where they have failed. He panders, bootlegs and commits bigamy for a living. Sometimes he "rolls" the drunken loggers for their pay checks.

William, Kenneth and Biddle all have minds of a sort, but they have minds that have been drugged by cowardice, by blurred plans and unrealized intentions. The class into which they have been born—the American white-collar class—is their nemesis. Kenneth sees only one way out—to go to another city and start anew. To William this seems futile; another town or city would be the same. In the end the two brothers and Berenice drive off in Kenneth's car. William has a bag containing some $4,000 stolen by Benny in the hold-up of a motion-picture theatre where Biddle was the organist. The end of the book is consistent and well sustained. The car runs off the road and overturns. We leave Berenice and Kenneth lying un-

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William has any remnant of consciousness, and he prefers to close his eyes and get oblivion.

Robert Cantwell has written of a class. The city in which the characters live is somewhere in the state of Washington, but he does not definitely localize his scene, or make something special of it as Faulkner would have done, for the characters he has depicted so convincingly and with such naturalness are as typical of all America as is Socony or the A. & P. The style is simple and reportorial. Mr. Cantwell has chosen to write a sound first novel rather than an overambitious one, and I think that he has succeeded admirably. EDWARD DAHLBERG.

The Man of Character

George Washington, Republican Aristocrat, by Bernard Faÿ. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 297 pages. $4.

WASHINGTON, perhaps more than any other American, has moved the French. He has moved and profoundly stimulated them. For the French he has always been a new type. Not all of them have understood Washington; some have been bewildered; but they have felt and tried to express the peculiar fructifying quality of that Man of Silence. Lafayette and his French fellow officers in the Revolution wept little tears of joy at the spectacle of his strength and selflessness. Delteil, glowing with warmth at the thought of the tall, pockmarked planter from the banks of the Potomac, and taking him to be the symbol of the New World, could rhapsodize with boyish charm: "Each man must some day discover America, under penalty of death. To discover America means to open one's eyes, to become oneself, to be."

M. Bernard Faÿ has not tried to uncover new facts about Washington; he is too wise. All he has tried to create is a picture, an interpretation; and for his material he is grateful to the good work of Mr. John Corbin and the indefatigable scholarship of Mr. Rupert Hughes. With Gallic logic and clarity, he has penetrated to the core of Washington's being—as far as any modern can penetrate it. By showing him as a Virginian of the eighteenth century, one of the last of the great land barons, a man who could not have existed at any other time, or in any other place than Virginia, he has shown him as the embodiment of all that was finest in Colonial America; by showing him alone, he has shown him as a lord of hosts; by showing him insular, he has shown him universal.

At the end of Washington's life, no one was more surprised than himself by what he had done, what he had become. Not since his fiery youth had he desired fame; not since 1759 had he wanted anything sweeter than peace and the leave to ride his horse and watch his crops grow at Mount Vernon. But he had patiently watched peace go, had seen fame come, and now he was one of the most famous men in the world. He seemed stunned by his fate, ever so slightly embarrassed. His smile had always been sad; now it became sadder. M. Faÿ reminds us that Washington had struggled for fifty years with the memory of a tragic and sublime love for Sally Fairfax, the wife of his best friend. This passion had matured his gawky youth, but it tinged his manhood with a sense of sorrow, of resignation, of fate. He never loved little Martha Custis, but she made him a dutiful wife. All he could love in 1774 was Mount Vernon. Hogs and dogs and the growing corn, M. Faÿ says, "had taught him to [illegible] into leadership. When it was over and he had won, he wished to remain in "the shadow of my own vine and my own fig tree"; but his people carried him into the presidency. He returned to his beloved Potomac after eight years of that, again loving his dogs and his cabbages, waiting with a sort of passionless fatalism for the time when he would be laid to rest with his fathers. He was an old man and he was sad, and he used to walk into his drawing-room and take from the table a key to the Bastille that Lafayette had sent him, finger it perplexedly and scowl as if he were a little puzzled, then put it down again. He was the Man of Character. America has produced greater generals than George Washington; she has produced statesmen far more brilliant; perhaps time will say that she has produced greater Presidents. But Washington, encompassed by his silence, is her rock of ages.

M. Faÿ has written a book that deserves to be pondered by every American. JOHN HYDE PRESTON.

Milord Rabelais

The Works of Francis Rabelais, by Albert Jay Nock and Catherine Rose Wilson. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 2 vols. 1,142 pages. $15.

The Life of François Rabelais, by Jean Plattard. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 308 pages. $6.

IN THEIR new edition of the works of Rabelais, Mr. Nock and Miss Wilson seem less concerned with Rabelais himself than with presenting to the English-speaking public a fresh and more readable text of the Urquhart-Le Motteux translation, which they describe as being less "a French Rabelais in English than an English Rabelais." The difficulty of accepting the English translation, excellent as it is, as a satisfactory substitute for the original is less a linguistic than a chronological one. Rabelais belongs to the sixteenth century of Francis I; his translators belonged to the English Restoration, and indeed the complete translation was first published in the reign of Queen Anne. In the intervening century and a half, the spirit of the times had undergone such changes as would necessarily bear fruit in the work of such free translators as Urquhart and Le Motteux.

Rabelais was a man of many facets. Voltaire, for instance, after having scorned him as an obscene and witless buffoon, came to esteem him (wrongly, as it happens) for his "slashing satire on the Pope, the Church and all the happenings of his time." Chateaubriand, the great Christian apologist, whose bellied style undoubtedly owes something to the fugue-like rhythms of Rabelais' prose, called him "one of the five or six writers who suffice for the needs and sustenance of the mind." By one of the strange twists that must trouble fanatical humanists, Romanticism retrieved Rabelais from the oblivion into which Classicism had dropped him.

Mr. Nock and Miss Wilson see Rabelais as a man of the Renaissance, a "great practitioner of the humane life." That he was. But he was also, less by his time than by his inspiration and the deliberate anachronism of his vocabulary and style, a man of the Middle Ages. He has vastly more in common with Villon, who preceded him by half a century, than with Malherbe, who followed him by a like interval. His work, to resort to a legitimate comparison with a kindred art, was less concerned with bulk of structure than with rose windows and gargoyles. It is this Gothic Rabelais that the English translators un-

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istics are changed into baroque. The sinewy grotesqueness of the original becomes gibbous and ornate. Rabelais' gift of rapid, concise narration, which he shared with the medieval makers of chronicles and *fabliaux,* is lost in the greater verbosity of the English version. The English Rabelais is nearer to Addison and Steele than to Adam de la Halle and Uc de San Circ. It is still good craftsmanship. Most of Rabelais, and some things that are not quite Rabelais, may be found there; but it is safe to say that, had the story of Gargantua and Pantagruel never existed in any other form, it would never have come to occupy the eminent place that Rabelais holds in world literature.

In the meantime, the Urquhart-Le Motteux translation does happen to be by far the most satisfactory one for the use of English readers; and it does deserve to be ranked among English classics. Although the price and size of the present edition seem destined to make it more of a collectors' item than any reader's *vade mecum,* the editors have done an estimable service in preparing what is certainly the best annotated text of the work thus far published. The Bohn Library edition, published nearly a century ago, has long been exhausted. Its notes, moreover, were not of a nature to assist the modern reader with the numerous difficulties of an obsolete vocabulary; and since it is only within the past thirty years that Rabelaisian studies have advanced beyond legend and conjecture, most of its information was of little value. Since then, various publishers have brought out de-luxe editions, with less concern for the text than for appropriately suggestive illustrations, which must have caused many an investor to conclude with a sigh that the book might possibly be more satisfactorily salacious if he could only understand it. The only point at which the present work has anything in common with such editions is in the excellence of its typography and make-up. The many documentary illustrations are well produced and chosen to increase the readers' understanding and enjoyment of the text. Assuming the reader to possess "the equivalent of a good secondary-school education" and to be "not too proud or too lazy to use a dictionary," the editors have provided the volumes with notes that are both entirely adequate and unobtrusive. They have in all cases refrained from explaining words and passages whose meaning is obvious to the average intelligent reader, and such annotations as they have made are successful in rendering the book pleasurable reading. In the matter of establishing their text from previous editions, they have adhered to the highly satisfactory plan of choosing the variant that presents the least difficulty and omitting any notice of the others. By modernizing the spelling of certain words *(smoke* for *smoak* is a fair example) and by reparagraphing and repunctuating the book throughout, they have dissipated the faint musty reek of quaint pastiche which previous editors have apparently regarded as an asset, but whose only effect was to annoy the reader.

The most legitimate complaint that can be brought against the present volumes is on the score of their being too inclusive. Mr. Nock's and Miss Wilson's temperate and convincing life of Rabelais, which serves as a preface to the present work, was published as a separate volume recently enough for it to be still obtainable. It is also doubtful whether the appending of seventy-odd pages of translation of Rabelais' minor works furthers the editors' intention sufficiently to be justified.

Professor Plattard is one of the foremost Rabelaisian scholars of our times. His book is a well written digest of the exhaustive original research carried on during the past thirty years by himself and by the Société des Etudes Rabelaisiennes, of which he is a prominent member. Although the author has refrained from placing too great emphasis on technical and philological details, he has followed closely the lines of straight scholarship. All but some dozen pages of the book are supplemented with extensive footnotes, and the criticism with which the biographical material is interwoven depends less on personal opinion than on extensive documentation. By virtue of its thoroughness and soundness, Professor Plattard's work deserves an authoritative and permanent place among biographies of Rabelais. RAMON GUTHRIE.

Book Notes

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

BERNARD SHAW, by Frank Harris. *New York: Simon and Schuster. 430 pages. $4.*

For the sake of the twenty or thirty letters from Shaw to Harris, this book has a certain value. It is interesting to know that the great Fabian, in March, 1918, seriously believed that "This is a Balance of Power war between Democracy and Plutocracy"; and that just a year later he could write of Wilson as "a great man of whom his country is apparently utterly unworthy." His letters on the question of sex (the subject that naturally bulks largest in the book, as it bulked largest in the mind of the tedious satyr who wrote it) round out one's image of Shaw on a side on which a great deal of legendary boloney has accumulated. But a hundred pages would have served for all that is of any genuine interest in this fat volume, and those who will pay $4 for the sake of listening to Frank Harris, in his decrepitude, ramble on about himself and Oscar Wilde, himself and Maupassant, himself and Bernard Shaw, will deserve to lose their savings at the next shell-game that comes to town.

CLARENCE DARROW, by Charles Yale Harrison. *New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. 380 pages. $4.*

Serious, well written and competent are characterizations that occur to one on reading Charles Yale Harrison's biography of Clarence Darrow. There are no rhetorical tricks, no attempts to whoop up dramatic effects. There is, indeed, an intelligent and consistent effort to let Mr. Darrow, so far as possible, reveal himself in deed, thought and word. With more than an ordinary allotment of social sense, Mr. Harrison sketches in the causes and conditions of the milieus in which the most famous Darrow cases have arisen; and the result is to sharpen and clarify precisely those phases of each situation which are least comprehensible when viewed through merely journalistic eyes. Mr. Darrow emerges triumphant under this treatment, as certainly he would not under that popularized by Guedalla and tabloidized by a dozen industrious jazzboes on this side the Atlantic. His homely boyhood in "Farmington," his unsatisfactory professional beginning in Ashtabula, his professional success in Chicago and tranquil break with the profitable, conventional past, are presented reasonably and readably, with just the right overtones of cultural and spiritual development to carry the tale along. The photographic illustrations are interesting, the anecdotes superb. One closes the book feeling that one has achieved a closer acquaintance with an American of heroic mold.

DISCRETIONS, by Frances, Countess of Warwick. *New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 301 pages. $3.*

Since the wing of Easton burned, destroying letters and documents, Frances, Countess of Warwick, once a butterfly in the "Marlborough House Set" but now an earnest Laborite, has had to rely on memory for her pointless anecdotes and rambling accounts of life in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Her faith

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touching: "First The Spade Work—Then on to the Dawn," she heads one of the chapters. For the rest, her memoirs are decidedly chirrupy.

EDWARD VII, MAN AND KING, by H. E. Wortham. *Boston: Little, Brown and Company. (Atlantic Monthly Press Publication). 360 pages. $4.*

Edward the Seventh of England wore his trousers creased on the side, knew the "professional beauty" Lily Langtry, and had, amazingly, a hand in the diplomatic measures that shaped the course of European events toward the War of 1914. In a very full biography which owes an enormous debt to Lytton Strachey, Queen Victoria's son is treated with an affectionate care which cannot quite disguise the fact that the man who grew old as Prince of Wales was not a remarkable person—though his witty biographer makes much of such gifts as Edward VII possessed. He was interested in landscape gardening and Mr. Gladstone trusted him, even though his Mama, enrapt by the memory of Albert the Good—who had had elaborate but unsuccessful ideas for the Prince's education—would tell him no state secrets. The stuffiness of the age Edward lived in and, for a short while, reigned in, is portrayed with a circumspection and wit that few biographers of royal personages have; and, while certain matters—the disappearance of the Irish Crown Jewels, for example—are not made clear, the account is thorough and scholarly.

History (of a Sort)

IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY, by Russel Crouse. *New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 192 pages, illustrated. $5.*

Should one look a gift book in the mouth? This one sparkles and snickers through the American nineties and nineteen-hundreds. Mr. Crouse is so little weighed down by his "profound knowledge of the American scene" that, setting aside tedious sociological explanations, he attributes the disappearance of bartenders and bicycle riders as types to the fact that "America is growing up." He is ingenuous enough to believe that one can't get a *pousse café* in a speakeasy. Elsewhere, he manages to give the impression that Wilde antedated Ibsen; and places the scene of the Coburn-Mace battle "in Canada just over the line from Erie, Pennsylvania"—a moist line, Mr. Crouse, if you'll allow us. His section on the prize-ring tells of the shift from knuckles to gloves, but mentions nothing of the shift in rules that made the rounds uniform in length; makes James Corbett a "waltzing" bank clerk, omitting to note his finish fight with skin gloves against Choynski—whose name he spells (typo?) "Choyinski"—and arbitrarily delivers the game over to cleverness and gentlemanliness at a point before the heydays of Walcott, Tom Sharkey, McFadden, Nelson, Wolgast and Mysterious Billy Smith. The illustrations, fortunately, are more authentic than the text.

1900 A. D., by Paul Morand. *Translated by Mrs. Romilly Fedden. New York: William Farquhar Payson. 206 pages. $2.50.*

At the end of his very smart recollections of the Paris of Proust and Dreyfus, Paul Morand asks of the 1900's, "Why were you so ugly, so rich and so happy?" The previous pages have been devoted to the ugliness—the Paris Exposition, for example—the richness—the activities of Robert de Montesquiou—and the happiness—cycling, seeing Sarah Bernhardt leaving for America, etc. The Dreyfus affair Morand treats as if it were a minor event of little importance, quite hidden by the brilliance of chandeliers in elegant parlors, and much less important than the smug stuffiness of the period, which he can, with impunity and success, patronize with smug stuffiness. Compared with Thomas Beer's study of the same period in America, in "The Mauve Decade," "1900 A. D." seems deficient in wit, in knowledge and in acumen, and, as a substitute for these qualities, has only wistfulness and a patronizing smirk.

OLD BOWERY DAYS, by Alvin F. Harlow. *New York: D. Appleton and Company. 564 pages, illustrated. $5.*

Mose the Bowery "bhoy" was at one time a compeer of the great Paul Bunyan. Chanfrau won fame as an actor by reproducing the present entertaining chronicle, explains that the evil reputation of the Bowery was caused by the iniquities of adjoining neighborhoods not half so colorful. He shows, too, that the Bowery is important in the history of the American theatre, principally because of the singers it brought to prominence.

Travel

BROKEN EARTH, by Maurice Hindus. *New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. 294 pages. $3.*

This book originally appeared in 1926. To this new and revised edition, the author has added a chapter in which he records the subsequent fortunes of some of the outstanding characters that originally appeared in it. Those who were Communists six years ago have, so it seems, been confirmed in their faith, while those who opposed the new regime have become more or less reconciled. But of course, the chief merit of the book is its faithful characterization of the old peasant mentality, before the inauguration of the real agrarian revolution.

THEY WERE STILL DANCING, by Evelyn Waugh. *New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. 317 pages. $2.50.*

Mr. Waugh records very palatably his "first-hand impressions" of six months' travel in East Africa and Arabia. In Abyssinia he saw the pomp and comedy of the Emperor's coronation and talked with the aged Bishop of Harar, who had known Rimbaud. From Aden he motored to Lahej and attended, as the Sultan's guest, an assembly of tributary Arab chiefs. A stay in Kenya provoked Mr. Waugh's least superficial observations. His concluding tour of Uganda was very hasty. The account treats of "general conditions" only when they affect the traveler's "personal experiences"—just frequently enough, that is, to lend some controversial interest in political matters to a book that is primarily entertaining and anecdotal.

Fiction

THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF 1931, edited by Edward J. O'Brien. *New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. $2.50.*

The principles which govern Mr. O'Brien's annual collections are too well known to require reiteration. If the practice does not in every instance live up to the theory, it is doubtless for the same reason that a frame is made to fit the picture, and not the picture the frame. Mr. O'Brien's great merit is as an encourager of fresh talent. He has the happy knack of bringing to the fore new names, some of which in a little while become established names. This requires acumen and courage. He makes mistakes, and dull stories find their way in; his discoveries more than make up for them. Thus, the contents will reveal Louis Adamic, Solon R. Barber, Alvah C. Bessie, Guy Gilpatrick, Emmett Gowen, Paul Horgan, George Milburn, Allen Walker Read and Anne Elizabeth Wilson—besides such established names as Louis Bromfield, William Faulkner, Scott Fitzgerald, Don Marquis and Dorothy Parker.

THE BEST BRITISH SHORT STORIES OF 1931, edited by Edward J. O'Brien. *New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. $2.50.*

The British collection offers more finished and suave examples of the art of the short story than the American—which is natural—but it also shows less experimentation; the hope which lies in virgin soil is not here. Such names as Kathleen Coyle, Rhys Davies, H. A. Manhood, Ethel Colburn Mayne, John Metcalfe, Dorothy Richardson, L. A. G. Strong, Sylvia Townsend Warner and Orlo Williams provide their own advertisement and, good as all the stories are, it would be difficult to single out any one story which is very much better than its fellow. Panoramically, the group presents something which resembles the almost even London skyline, very much as the stories of the American collection offer the more jagged, anarchic contours physically symbolized in the skyline of New York.

EBENEZER WALKS WITH GOD, by George Baker. *New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.*

The first part of this excellently constructed first novel dealing

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explores the jealousy of the aged foster-parents with subtlety and insight. The latter part, with its curious acceptance of the husband's version of his own motives, and its bitter disparagement of the wife, is less convincing. Ebenezer accepts the child as Jesus—an ingenious device dramatically, although the author weakens the story with unnecessary apologies for his character's delusion. One feels that basically the child is of no importance to either parent, or to the author, and that the catastrophe, far from being the result of the child's entrance into the household, is the result of some deeper trouble which his arrival brings to a climax.

THE FLESH IS WEAK, by John Held, Jr. *New York: The Vanguard Press. $2.50.*

"The Holy Bonds" is by far the best of these short stories. Its title is an ironic comment on the tale of a forced marriage, and gives the key to the bitterly cynical attitude which runs through the whole volume. Held's narrative is terse and effective, his dialogue has some of Hemingway's staccato quality, but the book leaves one with the impression that the author has chosen only those superficial features of contemporary youth which lend themselves most easily to caricature.

THE FORTUNES OF RICHARD MAHONY, by Henry Handel Richardson. *New York: W. W. Norton and Company. $3.50.*

"Australia Felix," "The Way Home" and "Ultima Thule," the three parts of this Australian trilogy, were originally issued in this country as three separate novels, and the concluding section was the first to appear. They have now been republished together in a one-volume edition, attractively bound and printed.

THE OLD CROWD, by William Fitzgerald, Jr. *New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $2.*

Old Colonel Wilfred Harlan moved quietly and politely on the surface of New England life. Everyone thought well of the Colonel, of his personal charm and his ability to meet social requirements with decision. But under the surface the Colonel was a hellion. In the intervals between his garden parties and his dinner engagements he managed to seduce every woman in his particular section of New Hampshire. He seduced Sue Trumbull, Claire Frey, Hanna Sprague. He seduced everyone's wife and sister and, for good measure, a number of servant girls. Fitzgerald attempts to show the dark torrents of desire that are seldom revealed on the unrippled surface of New England life. He has an easy gift for telling a story, but his talent does not range very high or very deep.

Contributors

JOHN DOS PASSOS, the author of a volume of poetry, a book of travel, two plays and several novels, the most recent being "The 42nd Parallel," has completed a new novel, "1919," which Harcourt, Brace will publish in February.

ALLEN TATE, poet, biographer, planter and critic, is completing a life of Robert E. Lee which will supplement his previous biographies of Stonewall Jackson and Jefferson Davis.

TED OLSON is news editor of the Laramie, Wyoming, Republican Boomerang.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON, author of a life of Zola and "Portrait of the Artist as American," will publish a critical biography of Rousseau next month under the imprint of Harcourt, Brace.

EDWARD DAHLBERG has completed his second novel—his first was "Bottom Dogs"—of which the title is "Flushing to Calvary." He recently returned to New York City from the coal-mining districts of West Virginia, where he has been investigating conditions among the miners at first hand.

JOHN HYDE PRESTON, a contributor to various literary magazines and the author of a biography of Mad Anthony Wayne, is completing a biographical history of the American Revolution which Harcourt, Brace will issue next fall.

RAMON GUTHRIE, poet, novelist and translator [illegible]

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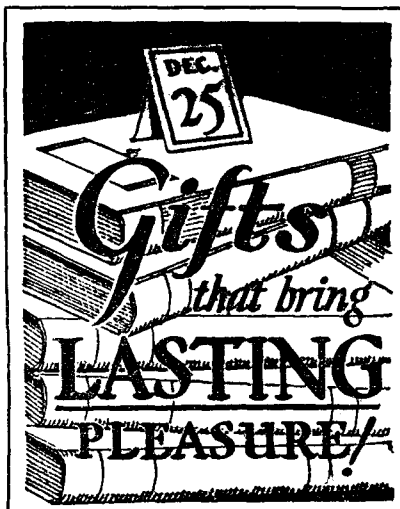

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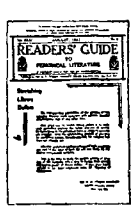

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